



MANITOBA
ROUNDABOUT



LA VÉRENDRYE MONUMENT, ST. BONIFACE

MANITOBA ROUNDABOUT

LYN HARRINGTON

Photographs by
RICHARD HARRINGTON



THE RYERSON PRESS - TORONTO

F5611

78422

#3

COPYRIGHT, CANADA, 1951, BY
THE RYERSON PRESS, TORONTO

LAKKINGTON, L

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form (except by reviewers for the public press), without permission in writing from the publishers.

Published March, 1951

PRINTED AND BOUND IN CANADA
BY THE RYERSON PRESS, TORONTO

Introduction

"MANITOBA" is one of those liquid meaningful Indian names that challenge the scholars.

Where the waves lashed and pounded in the narrows of Lake Manitoba, they sounded so like the drum beat of a mighty tomtom, that the Indians called it the "Strait of the Great Spirit"—*manito-wapow* in Cree, *manito bau* in Ojibway. Or is it from the Assiniboine *minni tobow*, meaning "lake of the prairies"? Still another version suggests that the name is an elision of *manito toba*, "God's Prairie."

Whatever its origin, the melodious name has been applied to the entire Province, stretching 750 miles from the International Boundary to the North West Territories at the 60th parallel.

It also calls itself the Keystone Province, from Lord Dufferin's prediction, "Manitoba is destined to be the keystone of a mighty arch of sister Provinces stretching from Atlantic to Pacific." It sits, a solid wedge between the Provinces of Ontario to the east and Saskatchewan on the west, in the geographical centre of North America.

Sir Thomas Button, wintering at the mouth of the Nelson River in 1612, was the first white man to set foot on what is now Manitoba soil. But it was the fur traders who explored it. The English arrived through Hudson Strait and Bay, and went inland by the rivers. The French came in by way of the Great Lakes and the Winnipeg River.

Scotch and Yankee traders from Montreal and the Atlantic seaboard carried their wares far into Indian country, and earned the name "Master Pedlars." From these grew the North West Company, rivals of the older Hudson's Bay Company, with whom they finally amalgamated in 1821.

In spite of themselves, the fur traders paved the way for settlement. First came the Selkirk settlers, dispossessed Scots who settled near the forks of the Red River. A generation later came settlers from the Provinces of Canada. In 1869, the Hudson's Bay Company surrendered its hold on Rupert's Land, the vast territory granted in 1670. The land reverted to the Crown, and was then transferred to the young Dominion of Canada.

The Province of Manitoba, a block so small it was called "the postage stamp Province" was created in 1870. In 1881, its borders were enlarged. By 1912 they were enlarged again, and Manitoba had her corridor to the sea. Her present area of 246,512 square miles, is about the size of France, or twice that of the British Isles. The population is less than four persons per square mile.

Manitoba is usually called a "Prairie Province," but the term is wide of the mark. Only a small portion is prairie, and even that is broken up by hills and sandy deserts, lakes and forest reserves. From each of them come valuable resources which make the Province prosperous and diversified.

Agriculture with its interlocking industries of meat-packing, grain exchange, fur farming and dairying, is the leading industry. Numerous small factories throughout the Province produce a wide variety of manufactured articles. No small income is derived from the forests, which make up forty per cent of the area. The Pre-Cambrian rock which underlies much of the Province is yielding its mineral wealth. Lakes and streams provide commercial fishing, and sport for thousands of anglers. The marshes are homes for ducks and geese, muskrats and beaver, all harvestable resources. In the

north is the seaport of the middle west—Churchill, short-cut to European markets.

Diversified as the country itself are its people. Waves of immigration brought newcomers from Continental Europe and the British Isles, from eastern Canada, and from the United States. Its earliest inhabitants are here in the form of 15,000 Indians, both farmers and trappers, and in the extreme north, a few Eskimos. To this land came the Icelanders with their nets, the Swedes to the forests, the Laplanders to the trapping grounds, the Norwegians and Danes to the farms and the cities. Hutterites, Mennonites, Ukrainians and Russians and many more came from Central Europe to homesteads on the prairies.

The names of the settlements are a roll-call of nationalities—Reykjavik, Killarney, Toutes Aides, Wuskatasko, Tolstoi, Selkirk, Holland, Bruxelles, Melbourne, Emerson . . . Most of them have been assimilated, and take a share in the life and culture of the Province, enriching it with their own traditions. Others have maintained racial groups, holding fast to their own customs and languages, yet adding colour to the picture.

Manitoba could be called Canada's "representative Province," according to one observer. "Because it is neither the largest nor the smallest, the richest nor the poorest, the warmest nor the coldest, the oldest nor the newest."

Manitobans regard their Province as "Inside the Rim of Adventure." This book is an attempt to capture on paper some of its allure, its vigour, its background and its achievements.

Contents

CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	v
1. WINNIPEG, THE HUB	1
2. NORTH ALONG THE RED RIVER	22
3. NORTH ON LAKE WINNIPEG	44
4. LOOP TO THE EAST	68
5. SOUTH BY WEST	87
6. HIGHWAY WEST	105
7. WEST BY NORTH	126
8. NORTH OF '53	143
9. NORTH ON THE HUDSON BAY RAILWAY	160
10. NORTHERN SEAPORT	179
11. CARAVAN OF THE SNOWS	198
12. DUCK LAKE	215
INDEX	235



List of Illustrations

La Vérendrye Monument, St. Boniface. *Frontispiece.*

Legislative Building, West Entrance.

St. Andrew's-on-the-Red.

Portage Avenue, Winnipeg.

Historical Exhibit, Hudson's Bay Company.

St. Andrew's Locks.

Bastion at Lower Fort Garry.

Drying Nets, Gimli.

Lighthouse and Lodge, Netley Marsh.

Norway House.

Berens River.

Indian Summer, Warren's Landing.

Lynx, H.B.C. Fur Farm, Bird's Hill.

Serpent Mosaic, Whiteshell.

Ukrainian Church, Cook's Creek.

Rock Lake.

La Rivière in the Pembina Valley.

Main Street, Portage La Prairie.

Manitou Hills.

Canvasback Duckling.

Minnedosa Valley.

- Frank Skinner, Horticulturist.
Clear Lake, Riding Mountain National Park.
Golf Course, Riding Mountain National Park.
Christ Church, The Pas.
Fishing the Red Deer River.
Village of Pikwitonei.
Windigo Flags over Graves of Cree Dead.
Train and Bridge at Kettle Rapids.
Government Hunters Release Beaver.
Grain Elevators, Churchill.
"Coasters" Dock at Churchill.
Remounted Cannon at Prince of Wales Fort.
Harpoonist Stands Poised for Action.
Sleighs Being Loaded at Ilford.
Snowplough Leads across the Lake.
"Double-header" Gets through Drifts.
Tractor Unhitches to Help Tractor Behind.
Chipewyan Woman Stretches Beaver Hide on Frame.
White Trapper at Caribou Post.
Caribou Is Chipewyan Mainstay.
"Edge of the Woods" People and Dog Team.

MANITOBA ROUNDABOUT



I

Winnipeg, the Hub

A TINY light pricked through the dusk below the airplane. Then another, and another. Presently a string of lights led into the blazing mass of neon signs and electric posters, lights glowing from factories and business offices, from stores and homes, floodlighting the snowy city of Winnipeg. Each street lamp stood in a little pool of brightness. As the plane lost speed for its landing at Stevenson Airport, Manitoba's capital appeared a winking diamond sunburst in the clear prairie atmosphere.

"Best-lit city on the line," the pilot commented.

From the cockpit, it was easy to see the pattern of the city, the curving channels of snow that were the frozen rivers, the dense cluster of lights forming the golden nucleus. It was like the hub of a wheel. Rows of lights like spokes led off into streets, and beyond stretched out sparsely into highways.

"Bull's-eye city of Canada," said the co-pilot, emphasizing his statement with a nod.

It was good to be back in the vigorous, proud, young West.

Metropolitan Winnipeg straddles the little Seine, the Red and the Assiniboine Rivers, all of them silt-laden, whence came the Cree name "winni-nipi" — muddy water. "The Forks" was the hub of transportation long ago, when that transportation was by fur trader's canoe from the east, by

York boat from the north, by sternwheeler from the south, or ox-cart from the west. Since 1878, its railways have carried on the tradition. And today, its position at the geographical centre of North America has made the prairie city vastly important to the air lines. Like Chicago, Winnipeg is a cross-roads between east and west, north and south.

In the taxi, the two-way radio set crackled with terse orders, with references to localities my husband and I knew well. As we twisted and turned through familiar streets, it was like greeting old friends to see the pie-shaped buildings downtown, the queer angles of the streets. The meandering rivers have preserved Winnipeg from the rigid grid-pattern customary in the West.

That cross-hatch of streets has its origin in the settlement of the Red River valley. The rivers formed not only the means of communication, but also the source of drinking water for settlers and livestock. So each must have a share on the river bank. The freeholds granted to settlers were from six to twelve chains frontage. How deep? "From the Red River back as far as a white horse can be seen on the prairie on a clear day," some said; others, "As far as can be seen beneath a horse's belly"—about two miles in either case. By the time the narrow lots were subdivided amongst the sons of a family, the latter were "farming on lanes," according to newcomers. Today the boundaries of those ribbons of farms are the streets of Greater Winnipeg, and their names commemorate the early settlers—Inkster, Logan, McDermot, Sinclair, Bannatyne . . .

The wedges converge at Portage and Main, "windiest corner in Canada," where stock exchange, banks, government and business offices cluster. It is obviously the heart of the city to the broker who complains at home about downtown traffic. Main street is a wide, long trail beside the Red, beaten out by the feet of fur traders and settlers. Portage Avenue, also adventurously wide and fabulously long, follows the pioneer Saskatchewan Trail that reached all the way to Edmonton!

Historically, the centre of Winnipeg is a little to the

south, toward The Forks, where its history began with the fort built by La Vérendrye . . . where the street names recall the fur trade—Garry, Donald, Smith (for Lord Strathcona, once a humble clerk) . . . where Hudson's Bay House now stands . . . Fort Garry gate . . . and across the Red, the Cathedral of St. Boniface.

Sometimes it seems that the Legislative Building (I had to learn not to call it Parliament Building, Ontario-style) is the core of the city as of the Province.

We lived, that first winter, near the Legislative Building within sound of the half-hourly bells of St. Stephen's-Broadway. There the Rev. Charles W. Gordon ("Ralph Connor"), author of many Canadian novels, was the beloved pastor for many years. It was a never-failing pleasure as we rounded that corner homewards to look across the park to the lighted Legislative dome gleaming at twilight. The Golden Boy, symbol of eternal youth, stood poised on the dome, silhouetted against a clear sky of turquoise deepening into blue. There were sometimes a few stars about, to emphasize its ethereal loveliness.

Memorial Boulevard, The Mall, runs past the war memorial to the broad stone steps of the handsome edifice, which Winnipeg declares with reluctant pride to be "the costliest legislative building in Canada, and the most beautiful". Of Grecian architecture, it is set in broad lawns on the bank of the Assiniboine, next to the Lieutenant-Governor's residence. Queen Victoria sits regally on her pedestal throughout the year, her august lap heaped high with snow in winter. Jon Sigurdsson, Icelandic statesman, raises a bronze arm in the shrubbery regardless of the temperature, reminding his countrymen of their hardihood.

Inside, the shining marble corridors echo to the click of a stenographer's high heels, or resound hugely to a book dropped on the floor. Those halls are a sanctuary from the winds that sweep the park, and a refuge of coolness in the heat of a prairie summer. Two life-size bison, emblem of Manitoba, flank the impressive marble stairs, which I have

rarely seen in use. Also protected by velvet-covered rope is the mystic Pool of the Black Star, far below the central dome.

It is often hard to remember that this modern city is still a youngster as cities go, having been incorporated only in 1873. Winnipeg's growth has been swift and fairly steady, after some experience of the "boom and bust" familiar to pioneer times. Eleven municipalities, including the City of St. Boniface, make up Greater Winnipeg's 25 square miles, and its population of over 361,500.

Its people are no floating population, but one that has come to stay. They have learned tolerance from the many different nationalities which make up the city. Anglo-Saxon, Slav, Hebrew, Teuton and French and a host of others intermingle freely, yet respect one another. Is it the freedom of the wide open space, or the nearness to pioneer times that accounts for their warm-hearted hospitality?

Winnipeg has a clean look about it, partly due to its use of electricity, partly to its building materials. Yellow brick and the famous light-grey Tyndall stone are extensively used. This limestone, cut from quarries to the northeast, is also in demand for fine buildings outside the Province, such as Eaton's College Street store in Toronto, and "The Bay" in Vancouver.

The stone is fascinating for its prehistoric interest, for it is imbedded with ammonites and trilobites, crabshells and seaweed of a million years ago. There's history in the walls of most of Winnipeg's public buildings.

One of the largest fossils is in the impressive Civic Auditorium. This building houses the Provincial Museum on several floors, the Winnipeg Art Gallery and two concert halls. There is nearly always something happening there, even on a Canadian Sunday. Concerts are held in the large auditorium, the ballet, roller-skating, speeches and lectures in both. One Sunday near Christmas, we joined the fur-coated throng at a carol service, in which choirs from many different churches and some schools joined. The singing was beautiful. I think I shall never forget "*No-o-e-ell, No-o-e-ell*"

with the high fluting notes of the descant like a shower of golden bubbles.

Winnipeg in the winter! Keen dry cold, so cold that the Winnipeggers boast about it. Days when you guess zero, and discover in the still air that the thermometer stands at thirty below. Days when it is only five below, but with a wind from the Arctic that makes you think it must be fifty below. But almost always, dazzling sunlight in "the sunshine city." On frosty nights, vapour steams from the man-holes at every intersection. Blue smoke curls from the little stoves inside the milk wagons. Cars in parking lots plugged in to electric outlets to keep the engines warm. The skating carnival. Hockey games at the Amphitheatre Rink, and pucks flying on every corner lot. Myriads of sparrows twitter and shelter in the leafless vines at Holy Trinity Church. Smart ski togs, made in Winnipeg, lined up for excursions to Snow Valley and La Rivière in the Pembina Hills. And the staff of The Bay singing carols in the December dawn.

When the policemen don their shaggy buffalo coats and tall fur hats, and shoppers duck into every second door along Portage Avenue to get warm, then the curlers are sporting tam o' shanters and colourful tartans. Eaton's superlative window displays flaunt Scotch plaids, cairngorm brooches and a host of other motifs from the land of the heather. In Balmoral bonnets and jumbo-knit sweaters, broom in hand, the curlers literally sweep into town. During the week of the Bonspiel, all Winnipeg's Highland blood asserts itself — in games, speeches and songs, in hearty dinners and many a "cup o' kindness."

Curling is as popular in the Prairie Provinces as hockey in Montreal. The first covered curling rink came into being in 1876, and the loser of the first game paid a penalty of a barrel of oatmeal to the hospital. By 1950, the Winnipeg Bonspiel was sixty-two years old, the biggest event of the winter, and it is believed, the biggest bonspiel in the world. At any rate, Manitoba rinks are supreme in Canadian curling. They have won the greatest percentage of the Dominion competitions which have been held since 1927.

The reason is clear. In the west, young curlers are encouraged by memberships at reduced rates, inter-school play-offs, and coaching by veterans in the game. Almost every town and village has its curling rink. Mothers know, when it is time for the chores and Johnny is missing, that he's sweeping the pebbled ice for dear life, luring the "stone" of polished granite just a little farther down the narrow rink.

There was no lack of things to do and see that winter,—meetings of the Manitoba Field Naturalists in the Junior University Buildings, social events of various kinds, long studious hours in libraries at the Legislative Building, at the University out at Fort Garry, at the public library over on William Avenue, with the film society that met at the Civic Auditorium, or frequent visits to the Winnipeg Art Gallery upstairs, with its excellent collection of Old Masters, and its spirited backing of Canadian painters.

Sunday showings are social occasions, but Saturday morning is livelier. Throughout the winter, youngsters from all over the city gather to express themselves on paper. They scurry up the stairs, doffing kerchiefs, mittens and mufflers as they go, hurrying to take their places in the galleries. Small children work with crayons, pencil or chalk. Slightly older ones graduate to water colours. We skirted bottles of muddy water, and paints spread out in muffin tins on newspapers. Some of the young artists lounged Roman-style on the flat leather cushions. Some sat cross-legged, tailor-wise. But one thing characterized all of them—complete absorption in their work. They were oblivious of us wandering through the galleries, peering over their shoulders. But they watched their neighbours' efforts.

"Fix that train up," commanded one boy working on a mural.

"I'm attempting to," returned his neighbour frostily.

In the large gallery, the Old Masters look down from their frames upon a motley assortment of artistic ability. But there is definite character to the work of these youngsters, subjects which do not appear in Toronto, Montreal or Van-

couver groups. The recurrent themes of grain fields and wheat elevators show the effect of environment.

Instructors, drawn from the nearby Winnipeg School of Art, move amongst the children, helping with mechanical details, or perhaps suggesting the treatment. "Don't get bogged down with detail, Steve. Keep it broad." Under their guidance, Steve gets away from drawing endless horses at least long enough to recall the swayback lines of a muddled barn.

Changing exhibits in the Art Gallery have a stimulating effect upon the children's work. Copying is not permitted, of course, but different styles do appear in their painting. One boy went through a whole series of techniques, indicating that he was observant if nothing more.

We overheard a lad of thirteen as he unconsciously imitated the curator, Mr. Musgrove. He was talking earnestly to his chum in front of an Emily Carr painting. "You gotta notice the flow of movement," he was saying with sweeping motions of his hand. "See, it's sort of like poetry in its rhythmic lines." His chum was vastly impressed. So were we.

Winnipeg is the cultural centre of the Province in many other ways, too, such as its vigorous Little Theatre movement. The Playhouse, almost lost in the industrial part of the city, was thronged to the doors the night we attended the presentation of *Dear Ruth*. Over in St. Boniface, Le Cercle Molière has a brilliant record with plays presented in the French language.

Toward the end of winter, the Winnipeg Ballet put on its final programme of the season, a tremendous success. It was an act of faith, when in 1939, Gweneth Lloyd of London, England, decided to found a ballet school in Winnipeg. This—after years of depression and on the threshold of war, But Miss Lloyd and Mrs. Betty Hey-Farrelly, the ballet-mistress, worked unceasingly toward their goal. Their students firmly believed that it would be a success. But like other companies, their ambition exceeded their budget. They tried various money-raising methods, even to some of the group selling wild crocuses in the streets!

Those years of struggle were worth it in satisfaction, if not financially. Not only has the Winnipeg Ballet built up a remarkable reputation and repertory, but it has known the "sweet sorrow" of losing members to the Sadler's Wells ballet corps, and to American companies. It pioneered the national Ballet Festival, which has become an annual event, held each year in a different Canadian city. Winnipeg led the way in the new cultural development.

But Winnipeg is proudest of another venture into the arts. The Manitoba Music Festival which occurs each spring ranks amongst the largest in the world. Certainly it has won very high praise from adjudicators of wide travel and much experience. The Festival, originated in 1915 by the Men's Musical Club, has outgrown their most elaborate dreams.

"Winnipeg has a world-wide reputation for the singing of its children," declared Dr. J. Frederick Staton, the British adjudicator. Pupils and teachers had their reward, when he went on to add, "I know of no festival in the British Isles where the singing is so consistently high in achievement."

Between fifty and sixty schools enter the competition each year to strive for shields and trophies. The Festival has grown from three days to nearly three weeks, to say nothing of the months of preparation that go into it. But "the object is not merely to gain a prize or defeat a rival, but to pace one another on the road to excellence," as one adjudicator phrased it. The finals take place in the Civic Auditorium before crowds of 4,000, and many a brilliant musician won recognition first at the Manitoba Music Festival. A single example is Donna Grescoe, the youthful violinist.

"It will be a great joy for Winnipeg when you have rectified the mistake of having no symphony orchestra to take care of such fine talent as you have here," one judge rapped the musical knuckles. "You should remedy this situation." Winnipeg took the criticism to heart, and a symphony orchestra made its debut in 1947.

As winter wears into spring in Winnipeg, keen winds slice into the snowdrifts, melting them under the warming sun, flooding the residential sidewalks with puddles that

freeze again at night. The surface of the rivers takes on a grey look, and presently the rotten ice breaks up into big cakes that swirl slowly downstream on a brown tide. Apprehension grows as the melting snows far back at the sources of the Assiniboine add their volume. Will the Red and Assiniboine and Seine rise above their banks this year? Home-owners worry. Usually, they can rest easy. But in the spring of 1950, the rivers broached their dykes and flooded part of the city.

The muddy waters were lapping high in the little inlet near St. John's Cathedral when we attended Evensong service there. The attractive stone cathedral is the modern successor to the little oak church built for John West in 1820. The light fell softly through handsome stained glass windows, throwing pools of green and blue light on bowed heads, and on the intricate oak carvings. There was pageantry in the ritual, in the mortar-boards of the choir, in the scarlet hood that fell over the Dean's white surplice. When the choristers paced out of the chancel, still singing "with the cross of Jesus going on before", the service was ended. It had lasted just under one hour.

The sermons alone of the first Bishop of Rupert's Land had lasted half as long again. In spite of over-long sermons and the fastidious lavender-coloured gloves he affected while preaching, Bishop Anderson was a man of dignity and kindness, beloved by his congregation.

Our short sermon had dealt with doctrine. As I glanced around at the new spring hats adorned with feathers, veils and ribbons, I thought of blunt Archdeacon Cochrane of the early days. He had gazed from under bushy eyebrows at the same thing, and paused in his sermon in his usual outspoken way to "hope that the heads beneath them were not being visited by thoughts about finery and vanity in the house of the Lord". He just couldn't help his Scottish attitudes, even though raised an Anglican.

Perhaps he found it too startling a change from the appearance of the Scottish women from Kildonan. "I remember," wrote a pioneer woman, "the women of the

Selkirk Settlement coming up from Kildonan to attend services in St. John's, in their blue cloaks and wearing white starched high-crowned mutches tied under their chins, with pleated frills on each side of the face, and a black silk handkerchief across the top for decoration."

Although a Church of England, St. John's was attended by the Scottish Presbyterians for many years until they got a minister and kirk of their own. It was in this churchyard they buried Donald Ross, long Factor at Norway House, carrying his body the eighteen miles from his home near Fort Garry. There, too, is the grave of Andrew McDermot, the genial Irishman whose kindness pervaded the whole settlement, and "who could talk more and faster than any half dozen men."

We strolled through the churchyard in search of one particular headstone, that of Margaret Nahovway Sinclair, and her son Colin. It stands near the east portal, a large cairn of mottled limestone surmounted with polished red granite imported from Scotland. It recalls a touching story. Nahovway was the daughter of a Company fur trader and an Indian mother. She married William Sinclair, and one by one saw her sons go off to Scotland to be educated. Colin she begged to keep with her. But in 1825, nine-year-old Colin went aboard a ship at York Factory, fell asleep — and his father left him there. Colin was educated in Scotland, became a sailor, and returned to Red River only at the age of 81. Tears stood in his eyes when he saw his mother's grave. That monument to his long-dead mother "erected by her wandering boy" bore his own epitaph four years later.

The surprising thing about the quiet graveyard is its profusion of trees, not rigidly landscaped but parklike. Indeed, Winnipeg's trees are a continuing delight to me. I had once thought of Winnipeg as a prairie city where the sun blazed down relentlessly and without interruption. But oak, ash, cottonwood and willows throng the banks of the rivers. Tall Manitoba maples line Newman, Wolseley and other streets, tiny seedlings only an inch high when planted by a pioneer woman in the 1860's. The Parks Commission

set out elm trees, and finding they did well, they planted them along most of the residential streets. Broadway alone has four rows of trees, blessed boon on hot days and graceful against the sky at all seasons.

The Parks Commission also maintains four large and forty smaller parks. Some of them are actually playgrounds, with ballfields, swimming pools, cricket and football grounds. Two have golf courses. But as might be expected in a city founded by Scots, there is no shortage of links, eighteen in all. Largest of the city parks is 300-acre Assiniboine Park, just outside the city to the west. It has the only Palm Garden in Western Canada, and is noted for its November chrysanthemum show. Summer visitors, however, flock towards the zoo. As summer came on with a rush, I particularly appreciated Central Park, a spot of greenery preserved in the midst of apartments and business blocks.

Just off Main Street, where Fort Douglas once stood, is a tiny park in the angle formed by the Royal Alexandra Hotel and the Canadian Pacific Railway station. The park enshrines the *Countess of Dufferin*, a little black funnel-topped engine, the first locomotive in Western Canada. On an October day in 1877, the steamer *Selkirk* shrilled her arrival from the south. On the barge towed behind rode the second-hand locomotive and some flat cars. Winnipeg went wild with rejoicing. Now it had rolling stock — though nothing to roll on. The *Countess*, so named for the wife of the Governor-General, honours the first lady of that position to visit the West. The Governor-General and Lady Dufferin drove silver spikes in the railroad, which the little locomotive then got busy building. The railroad from the border was completed a year later, and the *Countess* began to haul passengers and freight.

After a further career in building the railroad toward the Rockies, the *Countess* retired, to stand in state in the little city park. Cherished by Winnipeggers, the engine forms one of the quarterings on the city coat-of-arms, along with bison and sheaves of wheat. It has a fascination for tourists,

who love to be "snapped" beside the flowers and ferns that bedeck the quaint old *Countess*.

Another place haunted by tourists is the Canadian Handicraft Guild, with its displays of hand-worked metalcraft, woodcarving, knit goods and truly outstanding weaving. But arts and crafts are by no means exclusive with the white man. Tourists roam the halls of the Provincial Museum, studying the past. But wider-ranging is the historical exhibit on the fourth floor of the Hudson's Bay store. It is a reminder that trading post days are not far past in Winnipeg, and that they still exist in other parts of the Province of Manitoba.

You walk through a modern maze of draperies, radios, washing-machines, wallpapers . . . and suddenly, you're in a different age, that of the fur traders. There is spread out the pageant of previous centuries, of fur trading from its earliest times right up to the present. I watched a freckle-faced youngster press his nose against the glass display case which held a model of the *Nonsuch*, the first vessel to enter Hudson Bay in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, in 1671.

"Gee," he breathed, "I wisht I coulda lived then!"

The transportation group catches most eyes. Models of Haida canoes, of scows and York boats, sailing vessels and steamships and schooners used by the "Honourable Company" make this section of extreme interest. Real Eskimo kayaks and full-size Indian birchbark canoes are more impressive, though. So are the snowshoes used by various Indian tribes, the dog cariole and the Red River cart.

The items in the museum present a vivid history of the ancient company, as well as of the fur trade in general. No history of Canada, much less of Manitoba, could be written ignoring either. For the territory over which the "Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay were Absolute Lordes and Proprietors" was nearly half the Dominion of Canada. Flippant souls declare that the familiar "HBC" really means, "Here Before Christ"—which is more accurate than it may sound. The fur traders certainly got into the north and west well ahead of the missionaries.

The exhibit must cover a wide field, both in time and space. To maintain its interest, Mr. Clifford Wilson the curator, changes the displays periodically. Polished cases exhibit priceless and irreplaceable artifacts such as ceremonial masks, fine argillite carvings, blankets in intricate designs, made by the Indians of the West Coast. Soft clothing made of deerskin, embroidered with intricate stitching, floral and geometric designs in silks, beads, dyed moosehair or porcupine quills proved the wonderful skill of native women, whether they worked with a needle of pierced bone, or with one of steel from the trading post.

We often walked east on Broadway to Main Street, to another tourist "must," just opposite the Canadian National Railway station. Old (Upper) Fort Garry gate stands in its little park, overshadowed by the very dignified Manitoba Club, and dwarfed by the picturesque turrets of the Fort Garry Hotel. Virginia creeper almost obscures the plaques on the walls. Stenographers eat their lunches on the green benches flanking the gravelled paths. Elderly men read their newspapers, and little boys play in the shrubbery. They would rather play settler-and-Indian in the loopholed gateway. This surviving north gate commemorates a number of fur trading posts established in the vicinity. After the union of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company in 1821, Governor George Simpson had the wooden fort enlarged. It was re-named in honour of Nicholas Garry, later Deputy Governor of the Company. Since there were difficulties arising from the union which might take a couple of years to smooth out, Garry was elected for the job. He was the only unmarried man on the Committee!

The fort was partly washed away in the spring floods of 1826, and was replaced by a substantial stone fort only in 1835. The walls of solid stone were fifteen feet high, and had bastions of solid masonry at each corner. Sometimes of a summer evening, a piper in Highland garb would march around the gallery which ran inside the walls near the top, lustily blowing his bagpipes to the delight of the Scots in the settlement and to the amazement of the Indians.

A century ago, upper Fort Garry was a lively and attractive station, full of business and bustle, and the centre of the Red River settlement. "Here ladies wear their silken gowns and gentlemen their beaver hats," wrote Alexander Ross, sheriff and historian of the colony. "Its gay and imposing appearance makes it a delight to all visitors, and a rendezvous for every comer and goer." The Christmas parties went on for three weeks.

One party Red River will always cherish.

In the 1840's there was some trouble over the Oregon boundary, and "54-40" was the slogan in the air. Why, Red River itself might be invaded! News was slow in travelling in those days, and a British military force left Ireland in 1846 for the defence of the settlement—not knowing that the Oregon boundary treaty had already been signed. Three months' rugged journeying brought the soldiers to the Red River. The larger part of the regiment was stationed at Upper Fort Garry, where space became very congested. With no fighting to be done, the soldiers and officers found the next two years rather tedious. A favourite winter amusement was "sledging down the slope of the bank" on to the frozen rivers, a sport of which they never seemed to weary. They shared in the hunting and other pursuits of the settlement. But at last came word of recall. The parting ball given by the "sociable and free-spending Sixth" eclipsed all others in the history of the Red River settlement. And there had been many, according to Dr. John Bunn:

To describe the balls that have been and those that are to be, would be a task beyond the weakness of human nature. A mere enumeration would be a herculean task, but *the* ball is past . . . Polkas, galops, waltzes, quadrilles, cottillions, country dances, reels and jigs employed the heels and talents of the assembly. There were cards for the infirm and lazy, brandy and tobacco for the thirsty, and unremitting hospitality to all . . . All became hiccups and happiness.

A few years later, the stone-walled fort was the setting for a much less happy event, the Riel Uprising of 1869. For eight months after the Provisional Government took posses-

sion, the Métis flag — *fleur de lis* and shamrock on a white ground—floated from the flagpole. But the fort was abandoned when Colonel Wolseley's troops arrived.

The following year, the fort was torn down to give Main Street access to a bridge over the Assiniboine. Only the north gateway survived. Then in 1897, Baron Strathcona formally presented the historic landmark to the city of Winnipeg. It is the oldest stone building in the city.

At that gateway on May 24th, 1939, the Hudson's Bay Company paid its historic tribute to the Crown. By the terms of the old charter of May 2nd, 1670, a nominal rental was due for the grant of Rupert's Land, "... the Governor and Company of Adventurers Trading into Hudson's Bay ... *Yeilding and Paying* yearely to us our heires and Successors for the same two Elkes and two Black Beavers whensoever and as often as wee our heires and successors shall happen to enter into the said Countreyes Territoryes and Regions hereby granted". A fanfare of trumpets came from uniformed men standing on the castellated gateway behind Their Majesties, King George and Queen Elizabeth, as the rent was paid for the second time in 269 years.

Across the street from the old gate is Hudson's Bay House, Canadian headquarters of the famous company. It is disappointingly prosaic from the outside, even with its famous red flag whipping the breeze, and the coat-of-arms carved above the doors. Inside, the modern offices are almost luxurious. It is a place where tradition is strong. Today's fur traders wear business suits instead of frills or buckskin. Yet you wouldn't be surprised to have them write letters in Old English spelling.

The Assiniboine River flows nearby to its junction with the Red. At the western end of the bridge, we halted to read the words on the tablet set up by the Historical Sites and Monuments Committee:

The Bridge of the Old Forts. Near the place discovered by La Vérendrye, A.D. 1738, at least seven forts were built; the most noted of which were Fort Rouge built by the French (1738), Fort Gibraltar by the North West Company, the first

Fort Garry (1822) and the second Fort Garry (1835), both by the Hudson's Bay Company. Here were the headquarters of the fur trade and the seat of government for some fifty years before Manitoba became a Province.

Beyond is the Norwood Bridge which spans the Red River into St. Boniface. This largest of French Canadian cities outside the Province of Quebec, is known for its immense stockyards. But they are well in the background, as are its numerous grain elevators. History looms much closer. St. Mary's Road led us on to Marion, named for Narcisse Marion, a leading French-speaking citizen in St. Boniface in the early days. His home was a centre for hospitality and culture. Rue Taché cuts across, honouring the second Bishop of St. Boniface, a revered and wise administrator, unflagging in good will and good judgment.

On the west side of the street and overlooking the river, stands L'Hôpital de St. Boniface, successor to the little ward established by the Grey Nuns soon after they reached Red River in 1844. Facing it is the famous statue of Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, Sieur de la Vérendrye, flanked by priest and Indian. La Vérendrye was probably the first white man to gaze on The Forks. His men established a wooden fur trading post there, naming it Fort Rouge. Today La Vérendrye's bronze eyes gazing so steadfastly westward would be dazzled indeed if they could really see the city which has grown up on that slender foundation.

Farther along the street fronting out over the Red, and with its twin turrets mirrored in the waters, is famed St. Boniface—fifth church, fourth cathedral and now a Basilica. It was named by Father (later Bishop) Provencher, who scandalized by the rowdiness of the *voyageurs* and the moral standards of the frontier, wrote in his journal, "It would take the faith of a Boniface to work amongst these people!" He gave the new parish the name of the English apostle to the Germans. Historians suggest that it may have been partly in delicate compliment to the German-speaking *de Meurons*, a party of disbanded Swiss mercenaries whom Lord Selkirk had enlisted with the double purpose of populating the Red

River settlement and defending it. They did neither. They received tracts of land along the Seine and Red Rivers, where a street is still called by their name. But they were unhappy and ructious, and after the flood of 1826, they departed *en masse* for warmer climes to the south.

As we passed the Grey Nuns' Convent and Hospice Taché (the Old Folks Home), the bells from the tall belfries began to ring out the noonday angelus in tones that were more sweet than loud. The bells of St. Boniface—what a story is theirs!

The present bells have had an adventurous career. Five times they have crossed the Atlantic. They were cast by the well-known Mears of Whitechapel, England, and sent on their way to the Red River colony in 1840. Stevedores on the Thames sweated in setting their 1600 pounds aboard the sailing vessel which bore them to York Factory. But then the trouble really started. They were unwieldy, as were all the bells the boatman brought over that tedious route. They didn't fit into the York boats any too well, and they were brutal objects to lug over the numerous portages. In fact, the specially-hired crew went on strike. So the bells lay on one of the portages until the lure of higher pay inspired the men to further efforts.

At St. Boniface, their chimes rang out over the rivers and prairies for twenty years, until a disastrous fire destroyed the cathedral. The bells crashed to the ground, broken and partly melted. Undaunted, Bishop Taché collected the pieces which amounted to half a ton, and shipped them back to London to be re-cast. On their return voyage, the sailing vessel was damaged in a storm, and put in at an eastern port. The bells journeyed by rail to St. Paul, Minnesota. But freight rates north were fantastically high. It was actually cheaper to send the bells back to England, and have them delivered via York Factory the next year! They reached St. Boniface in time to peal forth their call to Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve.

Wesley Bond, a Philadelphia traveller, heard the bells in 1851. On his return, he wrote an enthusiastic news article

on their deep spiritual significance. John Greenleaf Whittier read it, and was inspired to produce the oft-quoted "Red River Voyageur":

... Is it the clang of the wild geese?
Is it the Indian's yell,
That gives to the voice of the north wind
The tones of a far-off bell?

The voyageur smiles as he listens
To the sound that grows apace:
Well he knows the vesper ringing
Of the bells of St. Boniface.

The bells of the Roman Mission
That call from their turrets twain
To the boatman on the river,
To the hunter on the plain! . . .

The bells were calling now, as we strolled up the broad pathway between the shaven lawns. The trees stood in the midst of their own shadows, often over some grave. There to the right is the burial plot of the Grey Nuns. Here are the graves of the pioneer missionaries and priests. Simple crosses, which only hint at the self-denial and faith and courage of those who lie here at rest. A simple shaft of polished red granite marks the last resting-place of the most colourful, controversial figure in the history of the Canadian West. "RIEL. 16 Novembre, 1885". The plaque on the wall of the cathedral tells a little more of the story, in both French and English:

To the memory of Louis Riel, born in St. Boniface, October 22, 1844. Head of the Provisional Government, 1869-70. Champion of the rights of Western Canada. *Ses Compatriots reconnaissants. Le 22 Octobre, 1944.*

Louis Riel was the son of the first white girl born in Western Canada, and grandson of the celebrated voyageur Jean Baptiste Lagimonière. Riel's father was a miller, educated in Quebec, and restive under Hudson's Bay Company rule. Louis came of visionary courageous stock.

"I often saw Louis Riel when I was a girl," an elderly resident recalled. "We all thought he was very handsome. He was very polite and well-educated, and he was so distinguished looking with fine wavy hair. He used to ride down from St. Norbert and St. Vital and often stopped at our house. He was a fine horseman."

Handsome, fiery Louis Riel remains today the enigma he was in those troubled times. Was he martyr or martinet? Feeling ran so high on both sides that it is a major task to sift reality from prejudice, and the feeling is not dead yet by any means.

Riel resented the assumption of authority by the Canadian government, but there is no evidence that he disputed the authority of the British government. Like Mackenzie in Ontario and Papineau in Quebec, he felt that the people of the country should have a voice in their own affairs. In the gap between the Deed of Surrender of Rupert's Land and the arrival of a Governor from Ottawa, Louis Riel and others set up a Provisional Government. Opposition was silenced by imprisonment or flight. When Governor McDougall appeared, he was forcibly escorted back to the International Boundary. Much disgruntled, he finally returned to Ottawa.

Riel occupied Fort Garry for eight months, in spite of the protestations of Donald Smith, who was serving as Special Commissioner. Responsible government was set up, its members elected from the people on both sides of the river. But before it could begin to function, trouble broke out again with the ill-judged arrest, trial and execution of Thomas Scott, an obstreperous Orangeman from Ontario. A fury of protest arose in the east, and a military force under Colonel Wolseley journeyed over the old fur trade route and the new Dawson Road.

The Provisional Government dispersed, and the leader fled across the border for a time. Nevertheless, the Manitoba Act of May 12, 1870, by which the Province entered Confederation, was based to no small extent on that original bill of rights drawn up by that elected council of French, Scotch and English. The twenty-five-year-old leader had defended

the rights of Canadians of the West. In succeeding years, he was twice elected to the Dominion legislature, but did not take his seat.

For some years, Louis Riel lived in Montana as an obscure teacher. But in 1885 came an appeal for help. The Indians and Métis on the Saskatchewan River, fearful of the survey gangs who ignored their "squatters' rights," urged Riel's return. After consideration, he consented to help them form a government.

But events moved swiftly, and beyond his control. In whirlwind time, an unorganized force of Indians and half-breeds assembled, and a force of soldiers, militia and North West Mounted Police was sent against it. In a series of engagements, the "North West Rebellion" was crushed, and most of the leaders taken prisoner. After a tense trial, Riel was hanged in Regina as a "rebel and traitor to the Queen." His body was brought to Winnipeg, and interred in St. Boniface churchyard, not many miles from his old home.

Thoughtfully, we entered the great church. The colours are restrained, nothing garish. The high arch over the sanctuary bears the words, *Le Dieu Vivant est au milieu de nous*. Voices whispered prayers in front of the stations of the cross.

During the summer months, a guide is on duty all day long to show tourists around the Basilica. He led the way past clubrooms in the basement to a scarlet-curtained crypt where are buried the bishops of St. Boniface. Down a narrow corridor is the *Musée Historique*, with its relics of Riel, Taché, Provencher, Lagimanière and many others. One figure of particular interest is the papier-maché statue of the Virgin with the Child in her arms, modelled by Sister Lagrave nearly a century ago. The Indian parishioners at Cayier were sad to see it leave their church, "because the Infant Jesus looks like a little Métis," they said. So he does.

We left the church, and sauntered on up the Avenue de la Cathédrale, passing the big grey St. Boniface College directly in the rear, then the yellow-brick convent and day school of St. Joseph on one side, Provencher on the other.

A footbridge leads over the Seine River to a little park behind the Belgian Sacred Heart Church to a grotto.

Cinder paths lead beneath the young elms, between lawns bright with flower beds, to the grotto, a replica of that at Lourdes, France. On the mound are three crosses with life-size figures. Beneath the calvary is a small chapel, where candles flicker on the altar. We retired to the park benches set on the lawn beside the river. Presently a procession began to form, each person carrying a taper. The procession wound up the stone steps around the calvary and down again, singing hymns. It was a lovely effect. Then the worshippers descended into the grotto for the Benediction. The grotto is a place of beauty and holiness.

We moved slowly back to Provencher Avenue in the dusk, and walked down the boulevarded main thoroughfare of the city. This is the business section of St. Boniface, with its Hotel de Ville (City Hall), Hotel des Postes (Post Office), a radio station which broadcasts entirely in French, and other business establishments.

As we crossed the Provencher Bridge over the Red River, an arching sign invited, "*Merci. Venez Encore.*" We did come again, often.

But not immediately, for we had planned to see as much of the colourful diversified life of the Province as we could. Maps before us, we planned sorties into different sections of Manitoba. Highways, airlines, railways radiate from Winnipeg. With that as our hub, we travelled into the regions beyond, returning where possible by a different route.

2

North along the Red River

Kildonan—St. Andrew's—Lockport—Lower Fort Garry—Gimli

OBVIOUSLY, the first spoke of the wheel pointed north, along the route of the fur traders and of colonization, north through the Selkirk settlement and up along the west shore of Lake Winnipeg.

Main Street led us out of Winnipeg into the municipality of West Kildonan, once known as Frog Plain, but re-named by its early settlers after their home in Sutherlandshire, Scotland. Near Redwood Avenue is "Bleak House," built by Sheriff Thomas Inkster, where he lived and died. It still stands there in its diminished grounds, practically the only house on Main Street with a garden around it. Only a little beyond is "Seven Oaks House," with its little park.

On a corner of the property, within a few feet of the traffic, is the Seven Oaks monument, erected by the Manitoba Historical Society. A shaft of grey limestone with the words "Seven Oaks" encircled in a laurel wreath recalls the tragic tale of the massacre on Frog Plain.

It was one of the bloody incidents in the running warfare between the two great rival fur-trading companies, the Hudson's Bay and the North West. In this instance, the unfortunate victims caught between the two were the settlers brought out to the Red River by Lord Selkirk. Neither company wanted the settlers, since by their cultivation of the

land they automatically drove out the fur-bearing animals, and the Indians who trapped them.

Nonetheless, the settlers were there, and to stay. Where else could they go? Their crofts in Scotland had been burned by landlords who wanted to turn the fields into sheep pastures. And Lord Selkirk had a controlling interest in the Hudson's Bay Company. Thus the settlers were tolerated by the latter, but became natural objects of the Nor' Westers' wrath. This is oversimplifying the story, perhaps, for there were many minor factors involved.

Told to get out and stay out, the unhappy Scottish colonists merely dug in their heels and sat tight. They didn't want to leave this rich fertile prairie soil, where they had so hardly-won homes and fields of their own. They were coaxed. They were bribed with the promise of free land in Ontario, but few accepted. They were threatened. But with Scottish tenacity, strengthened by the hardships they had already overcome, the majority stayed put. In 1815, the Nor' Westers drove them away, some being taken forcibly to Ontario. The survivors saw their homes burned, and sadly fled to Norway House at the outlet of Lake Winnipeg. More settlers came, and the first returned with them to re-build their homes.

The North West Company planned again. In July, 1816, a band of Indians and halfbreeds led by Cuthbert Grant descended on the settlement. In a spirit of appeasement, Robert Semple, Governor of Assiniboia as Lord Selkirk's lands were called, with twenty men advanced from Fort Douglas to meet the marauders. They were vastly outnumbered by eighty-five liquor-inflamed adversaries. A single shot unleashed the horror, and almost the entire group was massacred on the spot. The unruly band went on to besiege some of the settlers in the smithy. Homes again went up in flames. Fort Douglas was seized. Once more, the Selkirk settlers fled to the security of Norway House.

But the North Westers had gone too far this time. For Lord Selkirk himself shortly arrived with his company of de Meurons. Peace was established. A treaty was made with

the Indians, through Peguis their chief. The settlers raised their crops. And in 1821, the warring fur companies united under the name of the senior partner and under its impressive charter. Peace had come to stay, except for some bickering over the right to trade for furs between settlers and Indians. The settlers could now turn their attention to ordinary problems such as floods on the Red River, grasshopper plagues, schooling for their children, and the need for religious services.

In 1820, John West arrived at the Red River colony, and built the first small Church of England—where St. John's Cathedral now stands—and a little log schoolhouse. The godly Scots were glad to attend the services, which were simplified for their benefit. Sunday after Sunday, the Scots from Kildonan walked to service in St. John's, but they all rejoiced when their pleas for a minister and church of their own finally bore fruit.

John Black, Scottish by birth and first student in Toronto's Knox College, reached Kildonan in 1851. Stern and Calvinistic as he was, he was dear to the hearts of his people, for his passionate denunciation of sin. His powerful voice with its rich accent thrilled them, though his lack of the Gaelic was a sore disappointment to the older people. All were anxious to get to work building the kirk.

Kildonan Park's ninety-eight acres and the municipal golf links spread almost from Seven Oaks Avenue to the wall around Kildonan churchyard. On this plain the Indians used to have an encampment every summer, because of its easy access to the river. Before they broke camp, they held their annual Dog Feast in an enclosure fenced in with branches of trees. The rites conducted by the medicine men at that festival were the most important in the pagan calendar before the coming of the white man. (The last Dog Meat Feast in the neighbourhood took place at Fort Garry in 1873).

On this ground, John Black decreed, his church should rise. In one of his first letters from his new parish, he wrote:

The church is to be erected on a piece of land long desecrated by the idolatrous revels of the Indians, and by the Sabbath sports of some who bore a better name, but whose works were not so much better.

What would he have to say about the busy golf links, the throngs of pleasure-seekers in Kildonan Park of a modern Sunday? Practically within sound of the church organ are the tennis courts, swimming pools and winding paths of this most popular of Winnipeg's parks.

Unfortunately for the impatience of the Scottish Presbyterians and their new minister, that was the year the Red River produced a spectacular flood. Around Kildonan, the river which is ordinarily about 150 yards wide, reached far beyond its banks to a width of eight or nine miles. The building materials already assembled were carried away, and the work had to be started all over again when the waters subsided.

The long-suffering Scots hitched up their horses and their oxen to stone-boats, and hied them off to Stony Mountain, some fifteen miles across the prairie. They built well and soundly, for the walls are two and three feet thick, sound enough to withstand the Red River in flood times. All the lumber was sawn by hand in the old-fashioned sawpit. The moulding around the ceiling was carved by hand, still on view today. It was a day of rejoicing when on January 5th, 1854, the Church of Kildonan was formally opened, absolutely free of debt.

"There," said the old stonemason proudly surveying his work, "keep pouter and ill hauns aff her, an' she'll staun for a hunner years an' mair."

And so she has, although the foundations have needed reinforcing, and the stone is covered with a coat of rough cream stucco. I sat in the straight pews one Sabbath morning, and listened to the voices around me, many of them still with a strong Scottish accent,—*"Airly in the mor-rnin' my songs shall rise to Thee-ee."* Although the square pews flanking the pulpit have gone, the furniture is much the same after a century of use. The long black stovepipes from

three coal stoves stretch across the ceiling. As of old, the Psalms are sung in metre, and to tunes beloved of the Selkirk settlers.

Those pioneers will never be forgotten while a headstone remains in the kirkyard. There are the Sutherlands, McKays, Bannermans, MacBeaths, Mathesons, Munroes, Gunns, Campbells and a host of others. One Scottish name is that of Lieut. Alan McLeod, V.C., son of historian Margaret Arnett McLeod. He was just eighteen years old when his plane was attacked by eight German planes over the Western Front in 1918. "If it were possible for a man to win two Victoria Crosses," stated General Ketchen impressively, "Lieutenant McLeod can be rightly said to have deserved two." Unhappily the gallant young airman fell victim to the Spanish influenza epidemic a few months later.

Two headstones commemorate a man who isn't there at all.

Samuel Henderson had married a bonnie lass from Scotland, and he and Flora had ten children—most now lying in that same plot. They lived a serene life together. Of a Sabbath, they crossed the river from East Kildonan to attend services in the kirk Samuel helped to build. Sam Henderson was 74 years old, when a mysterious thing happened. One hot day in July of 1864, he got up from the kitchen table and went out to call the cows. He was never seen again! He disappeared as completely as if the earth had swallowed him.

No headstone whatever marks one grave. Only a peony bush blooms where Rev. Charles W. Gordon, the "Sky Pilot" of Canadian fiction, is buried. That's the way he wanted it, and that's the way it is.

Beyond Kildonan is a series of fur farms and market gardens, on the Image Plain of settlement days. Then cheek by jowl come the cemeteries, one after another, Protestant, Catholic, Jewish. "Want to stop?" asked my husband with vast patience. "They're modern—I like the old ones, that's all." But I would like to have visited the elegant barns of the Parrish farm, neat in cream, green and red, and with black-and-white Holsteins munching away in the pasture.

With such a colourful exterior, the interiors must be equally well-kept.

Not far distant we saw the roof of a church off the highway about half a mile. It was the original of many photographs and paintings of the "oldest church in Western Canada, built 1849." The river bends a protecting arm around the point, and the river road lies just below the churchyard walls of St. Andrew's-on-the-Red. The grounds are enclosed by a low stone wall of the same limestone as the church itself, brought from Stony Mountain or quarried from the riverbanks nearby. The headstones, too, are largely of this material, too soft for the purpose, for much of the lettering is obliterated and many are indecipherable. Many belong to infants—infant mortality was high in pioneer times. Several people were working in the churchyard, straightening up the slanting headstones, pulling weeds and setting out flowers.

We asked the location of Archdeacon William Cochrane's grave. One woman laid down her hand trowel, and led the way to the front and east of the church. Here lay the mortal remains of that beloved missionary, strong in spirit as he was in body, uncompromising of sin, unmindful of self.

Before he died in Portage la Prairie, he asked to be laid within the sound of St. Andrew's Rapids, and where the feet of worshippers in St. Andrew's Church would pass near his grave. He had his wish, though now the rapids are mute, and the worshippers few. In the custom of those days, the dead were carried to their burial on men's shoulders, as a mark of respect. Seventy miles they bore the Archdeacon's body to this quiet plot. The hard-working missionary had not spared himself in his efforts to guide the flock at St. John's. Here at St. Andrew's, he was up an hour before anyone else to turn the first sod. He established missions downriver at St. Peter's, northwest at The Pas, west along the way and at Portage la Prairie.

The Indians appreciated it. Peguis, the Sauteaux chief-tain who befriended the early settlers and became a Christian,

himself sent a plea to the Church Missionary Society in London, for assistance for the Archdeacon:

My friends, my heart is sore to see our praying master driven about like a slave to teach all the people here. You cannot know how far he has to travel . . . I think you are killing our friend . . . My friends, what are you about? You should send us another to teach us.

Peguis got results. John Smithurst, long in love with his cousin Florence Nightingale, answered the Macedonian cry. For twelve years he laboured amongst the Indians of St. Peter's in their village at Netley Creek below Selkirk. Since he and his cousin were forbidden to marry, both found sublimation in service to others.

During the first two years, John Smithurst conducted services on Sunday morning at The Rapids — St. Andrew's. He reported that in all seasons and all weather, as soon as he neared St. Andrew's he saw people gathering from all quarters, "some on foot, some in carioles, hastening one and even two hours early to church to gain admittance . . . and the attendance would have been seven or eight hundred had there been room."

Somehow they managed to squeeze eleven hundred into the church one Sunday morning. I can't imagine how they got them in! But Henry Budd's ordination was a great occasion. A native Indian, he had been adopted by the Rev. John West, and became catechist at The Pas. He was the first Indian to be ordained in Western Canada. "People gathered from far and near; about two hundred decorated carioles passed along the river to the church, making a gay spectacle; all the clergy of the diocese but two, were present."

St. Andrew's would be glad to be faced with the problem of where to put a large congregation, for the attendance has dwindled to a handful. Only a small portion of the body of the church is in use for regular services, the rest being partitioned off, and a small altar set up near the entrance. The century-old church is heated by the original Carron stoves imported from Scotland, the stovepipes traversing the

length of the building. Some of the kneeling benches wear the old coverings of buffalo skin with patches of the fur still adhering.

On the cracking walls inside are many plaques, memorials to those buried in the graveyard. There is one to Captain Kennedy, who sought the lost Sir John Franklin, and found Bellot Strait. The house he built of sturdy stone still stands just across the gully, a little further along the bank, where his niece, Mrs. John Norquay, lived out her later years.

Our road looped back of the historic house, and dipped again to skirt the river. It ran past sloughs where the Red had overflowed and where ducks of several kinds were now loafing. Past an Indian community of white-washed cabins. Looped around a small estate, and then there was Lockport ahead of us. Part of it lies on the east bank, a smaller section on the west, and linked together with the highway bridge over the dam.

St. Andrew's Lock is the only lock in the West. It was built in 1910 to overcome the rapids—once called Pelican Ripple—and permit the free flow of traffic up the Red River into Winnipeg. Much was hoped for of this lock. In his "characteristically happy opening speech," Sir Wilfrid Laurier expressed the belief that "coal from Edmonton would be brought straight in to Winnipeg some day via the Saskatchewan River, Lake Winnipeg and the Red River". Sir Wilfrid was less correct in this than in many of his prophecies. For one thing, he didn't know the character of the Saskatchewan River. Secondly, the next few years brought a great expansion in railroad building. The lock sees relatively little traffic.

This dam barricading the river backed the waters to a depth of twenty feet, overcoming the shallows of the rapids and a drop of fifteen feet in the river bed. The lock is located on the west bank, in a curved reach of the river, so that it is protected against the ravages of ice and flood, and is easier in manoeuvring for entrance. The entire length of the lock is 290 feet, including the canal section. The massive upper gates each weigh ninety tons; the two lower leaves, 65 tons

each. Each leaf in the gate is opened simultaneously by two men on each side turning a "crab." Then, when the ship enters the lock, the gate is closed in the same way, and the men go on to the other orange-and-black gate.

The Red, like other rivers flowing north, has a problem with spring thaws. The headwaters thaw first, and the melted ice sweeps down toward the frozen mouth. Great cakes of ice gorge in lower portions of the river, acting exactly like a dam. Some years the river floods its lower banks, forcing citizens to take to hip boots, store their furniture, and hunt a dryer spot to lay their heads.

So the dam which was set across the river at Lockport had to be of a special type. A movable dam was installed, which would take care of the comparatively large freshet discharge, without causing floods. A curtain dam is lowered into position after the ice has gone out. When navigation season is over, the curtain is removed and stored away for the winter, leaving unobstructed passage for spring freshets.

The upper part of the permanent dam forms a highway bridge, where traffic swings at a right angle, and the Trans-Canada Highway heads eastward to Ontario. High above the water, the cars look like beetles crawling across the bridge, one after another. Underneath, hundreds of sparrows twitter and nest in the steel girders.

Below the dam and lock, the muddy water was churned into foam with excess water pouring through part of the dam. The entire area was dotted with little fishing boats, rented from enterprising business men on shore. Many fishermen were standing on the canal prism, fishing just below the gates.

"What do you fish for here?" we asked a stocky French Canadian in a heavy leather jacket.

"Oh, every kind of fish in here—pike, pickerel, perch . . . you take anything you can catch. One fellow, he got a couple of carps maybe ten pounds each." He pulled in his line, and we saw that it held several different kinds of hooks and bait on the one line. Another line lay beside him, anchored by his foot.

"Is the fishing as good here on the shore? Most people seem to be out in the boats."

"Me, I don't like the water. Haven't been in a boat for fifteen years. But I don' see anybody catch more than what I got . . . coupla little pickereles and one perch." He shoved back the leather sleeve, glanced at his wrist watch. Then he resolutely hauled in his lines. "Most twelve o'clock. I gotta go home and get dinner, or my old lady will can me."

We went along down the river bank, close to the water's edge.

"Hey, boss, you lookin' for a boat?"

We smiled and shook our heads. But almost at once a young man came up to rent one from the numerous liverymen along the shore. He heaved aboard the rock anchor attached on fifteen feet of chain. Then he dickered for bait. "Can you gimme some crayfish and some minnows?"

"Sure thing." The nondescript individual renting the boats strode to a large galvanized box half-submerged, and perforated with hundreds of holes. Here he kept bait of different kinds. "You want fishworms?"

"You got fishworms?" The young fisherman was incredulous.

Earthworms or dew-worms were for many years unknown in this part of the country, and in many parts are still not of the local fauna. But they have bored their way into some of the Manitoba soil to its betterment. There is even an earthworm fancier in business in Winnipeg.

By mid-afternoon, the crowd on the river and on shore had increased to several hundred cars. Fishermen, their wives and children, youths and their sweethearts, made a picnic of it all, brought along their blankets and their lunches, and ate on the open shore. Several little soft drink booths made heyday of the fishing season.

"But it's only on Sunday, really," said a teen-ager tending one of the booths. "There's hardly anybody here on week-days—maybe a few on Wednesday afternoons."

A couple of fishermen joined us in the booth. As so often happened, the sight of the camera in Richard's hands

served as sufficient introduction. After the usual preliminaries, we inquired about their luck in fishing.

"Punk," they returned promptly. "Water's too muddy. Oh, sure, it's always a little muddy, but it's worse right now because of the rain they had upriver the last couple of days—silt, you know. We always figure on getting a couple of bass or so. But heck, today we're always pulling in bullheads, those yellow-bellied whiskered things. Now I don't mind eating catfish, if I got to, but bullheads . . . not me!"

We wished them better luck next time, and went along to where our car was parked. At the foot of a cairn on the river bank, we saw a sudden darting movement. Half a dozen striped ground squirrels darted into tunnels beneath the monument, or into holes farther down the slope. The cairn was erected in memory of a pioneer school that stood nearby, we read. It was a one-roomed school, of course, and the desks were boards nailed to the wall at an angle.

This one was started by Richard Stevens, a retired "writer" (clerk) of the Hudson's Bay Company. Whenever a man of any schooling could be found in a parish, the Church Missionary Society (Anglican) paid him to gather in the children and teach them. The early pupils of the Province met pioneer difficulties with pioneer ingenuity. Brown wrapping paper served as copy books. Bits of charcoal brought from the hearth at home, made pencils. Some graduated to slates, unframed, on which they wrote with lumps of clay. Sometimes they had goose quill pens, which they could use when the ink was not frozen in the bottle! Since books were in short supply, the hymn books, prayer books and Bibles were used as readers.

We continued on the river road for a time, passing many comfortable country homes, and observing the vegetable gardens down on the flats below the river bank. At a sign reading, "Little Britain United Church. The Old Stone Church, erected 1874," we turned in. The church didn't look as if three-quarters of a century had passed over it. It had evidently undergone some recent repairs. The churchyard is full of Scottish names, the older headstones bearing

reasons for the demise . . . drowned in the Red River . . . died of fever . . . froze to death . . . Newer headstones are a startling contrast, with the names Cherneski, Luchinska, Hyman . . .

As we paused under the trees, music suddenly swelled from the church, then ceased. The doors opened, and people emerged smiling and chatting happily as soon as they reached the threshold. A young woman wished us "Good morning." Foreign voices sounded behind us, and as a group of young men passed, one of them called "Good day" in a voice that came straight from Europe. The United Church policy of friendliness to New Canadians was evidently paying off in renewed strength of the congregation.

The old Stone Church was often attended by the staff from Lower Fort Garry, a few rods north. The famous old trading post is now leased by the Winnipeg Motor Club. It is a priceless relic of the early days of the West, and still fits Alexander Ross's description "secluded, picturesque and full of rural beauty."

The square grey walls have a round swelling bastion at each corner, fifty-five feet in diameter, though they don't look that big. Brilliant red shingles peek through overhanging branches. These bastions were used in the early days as icehouse, bakery, powder house, cookhouse and storehouse.

The three-foot-thick walls extend two thousand feet in all, only seven feet high, except toward the river where they reach a height of ten feet. There the Indians gathered in their canoes. There the swaggering voyageurs hauled up their York boats. Half-breed trappers pitched their tents on the grassy open space in front of the foot and at the sides, areas now garden and nine-hole golf course. Local limestone quarried from the river bank was used for the walls and for the buildings. Duncan McRae, a Hebridean stonemason, knew his work. He also built the old Stone Church which we had just visited. Although the fort walls are loopholed for defence, never a hostile shot was fired from nor against Lower Fort Garry.

We drove through the grounds, parked on the river bank, then strolled back within the gates, through the beautifully landscaped grounds. A young man in shirt sleeves left off gathering flowers and came toward us.

"Where are you from?" he asked pleasantly. We hastily extended our Visitors' Card, but that was not what he meant. "Weren't you the people at the Stone Church a few minutes ago?" We admitted it, feeling dreadfully like tourists "doing the sights." "You saw the way we are fixing it up? I gathered nearly \$4,000 last year for the repairs."

Martin Zonneveldt is as persuasive and eloquent as he is a good gardener—which is saying a good deal. Thanks to his industry, the gardens are a blaze of colour from early May to the end of October. The hothouses bear tomatoes and cucumbers for the dining-room, flowering plants for the clubrooms, and act as nursery for the plots which supply garden-fresh vegetables to the kitchen. He carries on the tradition of the old English gardener of a century ago, a master at his work. One elderly woman remembered from her childhood at the fort, "Beginning with asparagus, he gave the officers' mess and fort everything as it came in season. But woe betide anyone who touched anything without his permission!"

Lower Fort Garry was begun in 1831, on the recommendation of Governor Simpson. He thought Fort Garry at The Forks too decrepit to justify repairs, and planned to tear it down. This "strong respectable-looking fort" built to his own specifications, is still in use. That the two posts were called by the same name has caused some confusion, but Sir George Simpson didn't at the time realize the vitality of Upper Fort Garry.

The Stone Fort was placed at the foot of St. Andrew's Rapids to ensure the safety of communication with Norway House. Governor Simpson wintered at the Stone Fort during its early history, and held council meetings there with the officers of the fur trade. Trading ceased there only in 1911. Up until 1909, dog trains freighting goods to Norway House sped out of Lower Fort Garry over the winter snows.

On several occasions, Lower Fort Garry was garrisoned by military forces of the Crown. The first was in 1846, when trouble was expected down on the border. "So much accommodation has been given up to the military," wrote Clerk John Black, "that there is hardly a decent nook to poke one's head into." Then, when Manitoba entered Confederation in 1870, an unsettled period followed. The North West Mounted Police was formed, and spent the first winter of its existence at Lower Fort Garry. The next year, the new Dominion of Canada signed its first treaty with the Indians. Earlier treaties had been made with the Imperial Government. A plaque on the south wall records the occasion.

Indian Treaty No. 1 Dominion of Canada. Here on 3rd August 1871, this treaty was made between Wemyss M. Simpson representing the Crown, and the Chippewa, and Swampy Cree Indians, whereby those tribes surrendered all their rights to the lands comprised within the boundary of Manitoba as then existing. This agreement ended the restlessness of the natives, and left the way clear for peaceful settlement.

It was, in fact, a memorable occasion. For ten days the Indians sat over the discussion, whittling down their demands as necessary. By the legislation which made Manitoba a Province, nearly one-sixth of the land was reserved for the half-breeds. The Indians received assurance of a yearly payment of \$3.00 (later raised to \$5.00) as well as some on account.

But it was not an unqualified success—not altogether.

"The chiefs complained that the medals handed out were far too small and unimposing," wrote Clifford Wilson in *The Beaver*. "So the Commissioner promised to see what could be done about it. The powers in Ottawa were all for economy . . . Twenty electrotypes were made, about three inches in diameter, and then silver-plated."

The result of that short-sighted economy appeared months later, when Treaty No. 3 was signed at Fort Frances, Ontario. Then one of the chiefs held up before the throng of four thousand Ojibways one of the offending articles.

"I will now show you a medal," he cried, "that was given to those who made a treaty at Red River, by the Commissioner. He said it was silver, but I do not think it is. I should be ashamed to carry it on my breast over my heart. I think it would disgrace the Queen, my mother, to wear her image on so base a metal as this." Here the chief held up the medal and struck it with the back of his knife. The result was anything but the true ring, and made every white man present ashamed of the petty meanness that had been practised. "Let the medals you give us be of silver," concluded the chief, "medals that shall be worthy of the high position our mother the Queen occupies!"

He had made his point.

Off to one side of the gardens at Fort Garry is a roof set up over a York boat, a craft which proved larger than I had expected. In hundreds of historical prints, the York boat takes an important place. Sometimes it was propelled by a square sail hoisted on a mast; more often by long sweeps, more like a beam than an oar; manned usually by eight rowers and a steersman. The tablet reads:

This, the last of the York boats, was brought to Lower Fort Garry from Norway House in 1935. The York boat was developed about 1826 by the Hudson's Bay Company for transportation on inland waters. It was a unique Canadian vessel built with strength to run rock-studded rapids, navigated by oars or sail, and capable of carrying bulky freight. From Hudson Bay to the Rocky Mountains, and from the Red River to the Arctic, hundreds of York boats carried men and trade goods and furs in the service of the Company.

Presumably our Visitors' Card was to be presented to the hostess in the clubhouse, which was for a time the residence of Governor Simpson himself. "Go anywhere you like," said the hostess, smiling. But the card was essential, make no mistake about that!

Fortunately for us, one of the members, Mr. Bucham, offered his services as guide. "I said to my wife that I hoped someone would show that couple around, and she said 'Why don't you do it?' So . . . what would you like to see first?"

We followed him through the lounges in the basement where coal fires burn in their little baskets all summer long, to absorb the dampness of the thick stone walls. These are friendly dim rooms, reminiscent of English inns—the kind you see in hunting prints. Exposed brown beams, hand-hewn in Governor Simpson's day, tall settles near the fire, and a touch—but never too much—of history in every room. On the main floor, the long room which served for council meetings is now re-floored for dancing. But the thick walls with deep-set windows are just the same. Some of the furniture is original with the house, but re-upholstered. Over one fireplace is a beadwork piano cover which took a Cree maiden at Fort Qu'Appelle two years to complete. Above each door is a little shelf, displaying some of the original furnishings of the fort—pewter, china or crockery. Some of these doors are very warped after more than one hundred years of swinging, but that only adds to the quaintness. One of the long rooms is the dining-room, used when the verandah becomes too chilly.

Outside the clubhouse, we toured the grounds with Mr. Bucham. "The large stone building south of the clubhouse was the fur loft and the retail store. That similar building on the north side was used as jail and hospital, and the little log building next to it, was the doctor's house. We've put showers and lockers in the former men's quarters, for the sake of our golfers." There was a sound of splashing water and a hearty voice carolling, "*Don't fence me in . . .*"

By now we had reached the front gate facing the river, where our car was parked. We felt slightly guilty about having taken so much of our guide's time. "Not at all. Pleasant to show you around the old place. When we bring out-of-town guests here for luncheon, they're tickled to death. They all know about old Fort Garry. But it's the very dickens to get them back to town again!"

Back once more on the river road, we passed the old St. Clement's Anglican Church, several miles down river. It too was built of local stone, and had been the official chapel of the fort, and so it was sometimes called the Fort Church.

In its belfry hangs John West's bell, which has been ringing out the years since 1820 in various Anglican churches, but always within sound of the Red River.

A mile on the road led us into the town of Selkirk by Eveline Street, which was a pleasant surprise. We had always approached Selkirk from the highway on previous visits. Selkirk is a busy town, being a centre for commercial fishing boats. It has a rolling steel mill, the only one on the prairies and several lumbering concerns.

Selkirk still feels a little bitter toward Winnipeg. For this was the site chosen by engineers for crossing the Red River. Public opinion in Winnipeg overruled the engineers, and the Canadian Pacific Railway changed its course, making a right-angle to the south on the eastern bank. First through train on the new transcontinental line from Montreal arrived in Winnipeg in 1885.

We decided to run over to East Selkirk, crossing the Red River by the bridge which has a vertical lift span for the convenience of steamers. The road runs through country that is parklike, with big trees, mostly elms, and others which are either Manitoba maple or ash.

East Selkirk appears to be wholly Ukrainian, or Galician, as they call it roundabouts. There are muddled and white-washed houses, churches of Byzantine architecture. The whole scene, especially near the pond, is like an illustration out of a book of folk tales. At the water's edge, we saw white ducks which might easily have been enchanted princes. Many of the girls wore kerchiefs as they came away from the churches. I had the feeling of being transported to Central Europe—tiny houses, the foreign faces of the men, stocky-limbed girls, and deep-bosomed, broad-hipped women who paused to stare at us. There is also a new stone building with the name "Happy Thought School" optimistically chiselled above its front door.

Outside the town is a Ukrainian cemetery. It is full of crosses of wood and stone, mostly three-barred crosses with the lowest bar on a slant.

I read somewhere, in some book about Russia, that the



slanting bar indicated that Christ was shorter on one leg than on the other, to remind people of his humanity, that he was "in all points like unto us." No one else seems to have heard that theory, but I have never come upon any other explanation.

At Selkirk, Highway 9 takes an abrupt turn to the west and north, then straightens out to head for the resort beaches on the western shore of Lake Winnipeg, and to Icelandic and Galician settlements farther up the lakeshore.

It was Civic Holiday, the first Monday in August, before we went on up that way. Returning from the western part of the Province, we passed through wheat fields and barley fields, most of it cut and standing in sheaves. In some places, the huge combines cut, threshed the grain and scattered the straw in one operation. After a brilliant sunset of rosy purple and scarlet, night fell quickly on the wide prairies. Following a "shortcut" we lost our way on the prairie trails, and had to sleep in the car somewhere near Stonewall.

Perhaps that is why the litter around Winnipeg Beach—after a big Sunday—annoyed us. Papers and cartons and shabby buildings, it looked quite down-at-heel in the merciless morning sunlight. But it was something quite different when we returned from Gimli, rested and in a mellow humour. Young people surging up and down the walk, laughing . . . music blaring . . . children playing in the sand of the wide beaches . . . It was Coney Island on a small scale.

A few miles north is Gimli, the Icelandic settlement named for Odin's "Home of the Gods." From the storm-scoured island whence they came, the Icelanders brought a love of cleanliness, very apparent in their homes and in their streets. Each home has its neat lawn set with poplar trees. Fresh paint is applied with zeal, and an air of moderate prosperity is evident. At numerous corners are the ever-flowing artesian wells from which the town gets most of its water.

On Civic Holiday, Gimli is set to remember its past. Games and speeches are held in the town park underneath

the tall pines and hemlocks. Each year, Icelandic-Canadians from all over the Province gather to celebrate *Islendingadagurinn*, or Icelandic Day. Patriotic speeches, toasts to Iceland, to Canada and to the pioneers form the main part of the ceremony. One of the fairest daughters of the community is selected as the "Maid of the Mountains," the spirit of Iceland. Soloists and choristers sing traditional Icelandic melodies. The ceremony concludes with a march to the memorial on the shore of Lake Winnipeg. Atop a cairn of rocks sits a boulder taken from the shore at Willow Point, where the pioneers landed in 1875.

"Famine and pestilence had struck Iceland," declared the speaker eloquently in Icelandic (translated in a low voice at the edge of the crowd for the benefit of reporters). "Whole villages had been swept away by volcanic eruptions. Trade monopolies had impoverished the people, when a scout was sent out to Canada from that little island in the North Atlantic. Upon his good report, several waves of immigration left Iceland for this new world.

"They needed all their courage." The speaker's voice came triumphant across the quiet heads of hundreds of people sitting there in the hot sun. In the shaded grandstand, the aged people sat proudly, or occasionally wiped an eye at the memory of those hard times. "For those first difficult years, language was a barrier between our pioneers and the people of this country. Prosperity remained 'just around the corner' as many of those pioneers here today can well remember." A few heads nodded agreement, and old eyes took on a faraway look.

Gimli, though smiling and pleasant today, was hardly a place to lure settlers then. But to the Icelanders that sandy soil was infinitely more fertile than the lava slopes of their volcanic island. It had abundant timber for buildings and for fuel, a novelty to people from a land where the largest trees are not more than ten feet high, and can be spanned. As important as anything was Lake Winnipeg, then as now noted for its fishing. The waterway assured them of easy communication with the Red River settlements. Today lake

and river are paralleled by pavement and railroad. Gimli has been termed "the mother of Icelandic settlement" since it was the first permanent settlement of Icelandic people in Canada. From Gimli, Icelandic-Canadians have moved westward and northward, and occasionally, to the east. Icelandic communities may be found in all the western Provinces. North of Gimli are the smaller settlements of Arborg, Riverton and Hnausa. Riverton, end of steel, is where winter tractor-freighting operations haul in quantities of fish from Lake Winnipeg, both fresh and frozen.

We fell into discussion with one of the men responsible for the arrangements. "I've been looking for a pure Icelandic type," I mentioned, "but there seems to be everything here—blondes, brunettes, redheads."

He laughed. "Don't you now the reason? When our sea-kings went sailing, they brought home captives from the lands they plundered. Sometimes they made them slaves, sometimes they married them, and so you get every colouring in the Icelandic people." And then, too, Icelanders have intermarried with most of the races that make up the Canadian people. "You'll find us Icelanders into everything—and sometimes we're said to drive a very hard bargain! Business men—quite a few Icelanders are in the building trades. Some are fishermen, farmers, fur ranchers, trappers or traders. We have lawyers, teachers, doctors and statesmen . . ."

Icelanders have fitted themselves into the life of their new land better than most, and have contributed hugely to the development of Manitoba. Some have become world-famous, as witness the explorer and Arctic encyclopedist Vilhjalmur Stefansson, Icelandic-Canadian by birth. Two have gone to Oxford as Rhodes scholars. Many have become writers and poets, both in English and Icelandic.

"Education was always a strong feature of Icelandic life," our informant went on. "In Iceland you wouldn't find a cottage without its shelf of books. We are proud of our ancient literature and language. Back in Iceland, illiteracy is unknown."

The old sagas are not forgotten in the new homes. In spite of the fact that Icelandic is a difficult tongue, there is a course in it at the University of Manitoba, for those who wish to read the great epics in the original.

"And the Icelandic people have given us a great tradition of self-government!" The next speaker was Anglo-Saxon, representing the Provincial government on this great day. "Taking an active part in the affairs of the country is second nature to the Icelandic people, who had a parliament of their own more than a thousand years ago. Before Eric the Red cruised the shores of North America, the *Althing* (Icelandic Parliament) was established. It forms the oldest democratic government still functioning in the world."

There were smiles and happy faces throughout the crowd. For praise is no less sweet when it is for something accomplished by long-dead ancestors. But to most of the people there, and especially the young people, Icelandic Day is really only a social occasion. It is a "sentimental journey," strengthening the loyalties to both Iceland and Canada.

The celebrations over, we drifted from the park. The chief industry in Gimli is commercial fishing, and Icelanders form seventy-five per cent of the fishermen on Lake Winnipeg. We noticed the white picket fences festooned with nets, drying and awaiting repairs. The nets are frequently torn by the struggles of large fish. White when new, the nets soon become stained with henna in the tanning fluid which strengthens them, and makes them less visible to the fish.

The harbour, an amazingly neat water-front, is lined with fishing boats. Man-made piers built out from the gravel beach form a placid sheltered bay for the fishing craft. Gas boats, sturdy and broad, are built to ride over the twenty- and thirty-foot waves sometimes encountered on Lake Winnipeg. One shop in town can turn out twenty fishing skiffs a week, although many of the fishermen build their own craft.

Lake Winnipeg, that 250-mile long remnant of prehistoric Lake Agassiz and ninth largest lake in the world, has three fishing seasons. At the start of the summer season, the boats

ride out of the snug harbour, towed in the wake of diesel-motored larger crafts. Boxes for packing fish, square boxes for the nets, floats with little flags are piled up on the decks. The men may be away for two months at a time at the northern end of the lake.

We stood now, and watched the odd pleasure craft scuttling across the water. Someday, we planned, we too would cruise to the head of the lake, see the fishing stations, prowl around historic Norway House . . .

3

North on Lake Winnipeg

Red River—Berens River—Warren's Landing—Norway House
Grand Rapids

WE SAW the rest of the lake the following summer.

One of Manitoba's chief vacation attractions is a week's round-trip by steamer down the Red River and Lake Winnipeg to Norway House, the famous old trading post of the Hudson's Bay Company. The *Keenora* is a dapper little ship, carrying passengers and freight. Though somewhat crowded in mid-summer, it makes a delightful cruise on Manitoba's inland sea.

We went near the beginning of the season, before the full quota of 108 passengers crowds aboard the 560-ton vessel. The *Keenora's* first trip comes early in June, its last, early in October. No denying, the wind was chill much of the time. But there was always some corner in the lee of the smokestack or on the stern deck where we could sit outside.

On a hot bright afternoon, Indian deckhands carried our bags aboard the *Keenora*, down at Redwood Dock, once the estate of William Inkster, Selkirk settler. It was a relief to lounge on deck with the cooling breezes playing over bare shoulders after the unseasonable sweltering heat of the city.

By mid-afternoon, all was in readiness. The skipper pulled the bell-cord which hooted to all that we were leaving. A man running down the slope put on a fresh burst of speed,

leaped toward the door of the lower deck—and made it. A second's hesitation, and he and the film he had gone to fetch, would have landed in the muddy Red.

We floated down the curving waterway between banks generously covered with ash, maple, willow and elm. In most cases, private gardens ran down to the river, and some owners had reinforced the banks with rocks, to keep the current from tearing away the soil. The ice, particularly in spring, gouges large chunks out of the rich dark shoreline, and the current steadily whittles away at the earth banks.

St. John's Park, cool and green, stretched on the left-hand shore. Above the trees we caught a little glimpse of the cathedral's flat tower, on which a steeple will someday rise. Then came the broad acres of Kildonan Park.

"Did I mention that I saw a deer there last night?" said Richard. "I was just sitting there in the car, and suddenly this deer bounded out of some bushes, stood around for a few minutes, then bounced away again." I could only mourn that I had not seen it, too.

Quite often the shores looked parklike, and we realized that here was yet another golf course. "Sort of like Corot's paintings," murmured the woman in the next deck chair. She was a teacher from St. Paul, Minnesota.

The two sides of the river contrasted strangely, as we went farther downstream. On the east, the bulbous turrets, and quaint muddled houses of New Canadians. On the other side, the narrow farms and stone houses built by Scottish masons for well-to-do settlers. Several of these stone houses with their gracious Georgian lines face out over the river. Sound and sturdy, they were built of local stone, in simple architecture that has stood the test of severe prairie weather. All are now private residences.

First appeared the building which had been Miss Matilda Davis' School for Young Ladies. The young ladies of the settlement and from the homes of fur trade factors of the whole west learned a variety of subjects, but deportment was stressed above all else. The building, heated only by Carron stoves, was frigid of a winter's morning, when Miss Matilda

came around in her dressing-gown, candle in hand, calling, "Are you all up, young ladies? Get up, all of you!" The thought of mashed potatoes for breakfast every single day couldn't have been much inducement to brave the chilly halls. Then on Sunday, the girls would march two-by-two to St. Andrew's Church, half a mile down the riverbank, to take their places in the five pews reserved for them.

They had a shorter walk later on, after Miss Davis went to her reward, and lessons were carried on in St. Andrew's Rectory, which stands at the bend of the river. Archdeacon Cochrane, a powerful man, helped to build the rectory in which he lived for three years, and where his wife taught school. After a few years of standing empty, the house was taken over briefly by the Brotherhood of the Cross, a group of itinerant missionaries. Today, after another session of idleness, the old stone rectory is once again a home.

Beyond St. Andrew's is the third stone house, that built by Captain Kennedy. Winnipegers identify it as "the old Norquay house", though it has had several changes of ownership. It was a centre of hospitality and merriment, and many were its distinguished guests. One of these was Joseph Howe of Nova Scotia, a Father of Confederation. There, too, was formulated the carefully-restrained speech of welcome designed for Governor William McDougall, who was turned back at the border. Mrs. Kennedy, tall, dignified and talented, was sometimes called "The Duchess" from her stately bearing. A grandniece of Kennedy's rehabilitated the house in the early 1920's, and its beauty is maintained, even though it has changed hands.

The *Keenora* tooted for a railway bridge, which slowly swung on its pivot, then swung back as we passed. The river curved now right, now left. Nearing Lockport, we could see the onion-shaped spires of the Ukrainian churches at Gonor, some silver, some green. A few more sharp toots of the steamer's whistle, and now, twenty miles below Winnipeg we were ready for St. Andrew's Lock. The *Keenora* moved in to the west side of the canal. Cameras clicked and buzzed from the ship's rail, when Captain Hokansson went ashore

to lend a hand at turning the crabs to open the leaves of the upper gate.

"Well, no, I don't usually do that," he admitted rather sheepishly, "but I just thought I'd give the boys a hand." He had certainly given the tourists considerable footage on their movie cameras.

We passed into the lock, and the gate was as slowly closed behind us. We waited there under the bridge which crosses over the dam, watched the slow-moving traffic, whose drivers were watching us. Above our heads was the movable section of the bridge, a bascule-lift, which however, is rarely raised. The passengers crowded to the bow, marvelling to see the water slowly drop away in the lock chamber. Automatic cylindrical valves are located just below the lower gates, but during times of low water, the *Keenora* is just apt to skip the trip through the canal, and berth at Selkirk. The entire operation of locking through took about twenty minutes.

Then we were below the locks, the basin empty of fishermen. Down the river we drifted, passing the grey walls and red roofs of Lower Fort Garry, easily seen from the river. It was fun to picture the fleets of canoes and York boats that clustered at the foot of that steep bank in years gone by. Beyond it, on the same side of the river, appears Hawthorne Lodge, built by a retired Hudson's Bay Company factor, Harrioch, and now owned by the Attorney-General of the Province. Money and taste have restored the stone bungalow to even more than its original charm.

Almost at once, the *Keenora* blew again, this time for the Selkirk highway bridge, and the centre lift span rose high above the river. Now that all obstruction and high-tension wires had been passed, down came our gaily-painted bowsprit; up went our mast forty feet above the deck.

And now came another bell, even more agreeable. The pleasant head waitress came through the saloon and out around the decks, vigorously ringing a handbell. It was the signal for the first table sitting. The meals, we soon discovered, were quite good. Our table companion was a full-blooded Sioux Indian, a teacher from Illinois, in charge

of the school band. He took the keenest interest throughout the trip in every aspect of Canadian Indian life.

At Selkirk, instead of sidling up to the dock in regulation style, the *Keenora* circled, and came alongside with her bow pointing upstream. "Never get her close to the dock with the current in this river, if I didn't do that," the captain explained later. On the wharf, remote-eyed Indians sat in the shade. Grandmothers smoking cigarettes. Babies crawling around their feet. Young men loading freight. Girls twittering in the background, of course. Here we took on a large group of Lutheran Icelandic Ladies Aid delegates, heading for a convention on Hecla Island.

In the warm evening, practically all the ship's passengers climbed the companionway to sit in deck chairs or lounge over the rail. The Icelandic ladies in the bow began to sing—a little thin but pleasant, once they agreed to sing the same song! Many of the lyrics were in Icelandic which every woman of them knew perfectly.

Below Selkirk, we passed the Indian Reserve at Netley Creek, once known as *Rivière aux Morts*, from a massacre of the Saulteaux by the Sioux. On the east side of the river at Sugar Point, the little stone church of St. Peter's sits in a sylvan setting. There Chief Peguis lies buried inside the churchyard. To his great grief, his prodigal son, a heathen and a suicide, had to be buried outside. The tin pie-plates ornamented with copper are treasured and still used for collections, as in John Smithurst's day.

As the evening advanced, it became cooler, and we all reached for coat or jacket. But it was lovely, travelling down the narrows of the delta of the Red River between low flat banks. Beautiful colours of sky and earth met at Netley Marsh, spread out for miles on either hand. Mostly green at this time of year, it was laced with blue lanes of water, and with the gold of last year's dried stalks. Birds abounded—ducks, gulls and terns, blackbirds, sparrows, various warblers and the occasional great blue heron.

The river leads like a lane through fairly solid banks with the marsh lying immediately beyond. There are many

little houses along that low ridge, some of farmers, some of Indians, some shooting lodges. Netley is famous for its duck shoot. Two lighthouses mark the entrance to Lake Winnipeg, lying like a great grey sheet ahead.

This part of the river, too, shows the effect of spring ice, for the banks are gouged and torn, even where they have been palisaded with piles and rock fill. The piling continues far out into the lake, like jagged broken teeth. Far across the marsh are grain elevators of Libau, hump-shouldered and tiny in the distance, justifying the fantasy "the castles of the New World." Once out into the lake, we could see a few lights twinkling from Grand Beach resorts on the east, and from Winnipeg Beach to our left.

The night was perfectly calm, and had we been under sail we would have been as helpless as the sloops in which Paul Kane anchored here a century ago. While waiting for a favourable wind, the indefatigable artist visited a camp of Saulteaux Indians nearby, and recorded the scene in his *Wanderings of a Canadian Artist* as well as on canvas.

After finishing my sketch which they all looked at with great astonishment, a medicine-man stepped up and told us that he would give us three days' fair wind for a pound of tobacco. As the demand was so enormous for so small a supply of wind, we declined the bargain. Whereupon he hesitantly reduced his price, offering a greater quantity of wind for a small amount of tobacco. Until at length having reduced his price to a small plug for six days, we closed the bargain . . . The next day hauled up our anchor and left the mouth of the river with a fair wind.

Kane was half-convinced that there might be something to this sorcery, after all. As darkness fell, we moved from the open deck into the saloon, to become better acquainted with our fellow passengers. Three librarians from Edmonton, filling in time before a convention. Botanists going north for the government. A priest from Berens River. A preacher from Rossville, with an almost too well-behaved young son. A Mounted Policeman in "civvies" with an adorable two-year-old wearing brand-new arch-preserver shoes back to

Norway House. Tourists from Minnesota, Missouri, Ontario, Illinois.

The Icelandic ladies, thirty-five in all, filled the saloon to overflowing, sang briefly, then settled down to playing bridge. One old lady of eighty-two utterly refused to be packed off to rest in a cabin. She turned out to be a card-shark, taking tricks from all her opponents. They played steadily until 2.30 in the morning, when the *Keenora* docked at Hecla.

Early next morning, we had put in at Pine Dock. Most of the passengers were up, though it was only 5.30; since no one wanted to miss anything. Anyway, first call for breakfast was only an hour later. Pine Dock was a small fishing community. There were numerous Indians and half-breeds, fetching and carrying. On shore were piles of new-made fish boxes, reels for drying nets, and a pole-slide where the fishermen store the ice cut in winter for packing the fish caught in summer.

Past the eroded limestone rocks of Matheson Island, we reached its wharf. Here live seven families, much inter-married. The community is strung out along the shore, another fishing village. So is Black Bear Island, with its red ice-houses. A white lighthouse warns from a corner of the island. Beyond it are more limestone crags, eroded into pillars, arches and caves by water action.

"In spite of all the rock around here, the water is still very muddy," remarked one of the librarians.

"That's because the lake is so shallow," returned her friend, who had evidently boned-up on her subject. "The average depth is only ten feet, and nowhere deeper than a hundred. And of course, the wind gets a good sweep from every direction."

The Indians had a theory, or at least a legend, to account for the appearance. They said it was the work of a spiteful spirit, who delighted in tormenting them. He had been captured and punished by an old woman of the tribe. The spirit eventually escaped, hiding itself in the water, and after that, displayed its temper by stirring up the mud at the

bottom of the lake. Sir John Franklin had a slightly different ending in his version. In it the "mischievous deity" escaped from the old women of the tribe in such a filthy condition, that it took all the waters of the great lake to wash himself clean.

But certainly the wind can blow on Lake Winnipeg. Alexander Henry, the elder, met a severe gale near Great Black Island at "the island called Buffalo's Head." He and some others saved themselves, but "not without the loss of a canoe and four men." Paul Kane, too, got an overdose of wind on his return trip.

We left in the morning with a strong breeze which changed to a perfect gale, making many of our Indians seasick. . . . By dint of constant baling we arrived at the mouth of Behring's River, which we entered in safety.

It was when we entered into the channel leading to Berens River, that we too, were struck by a sudden storm. No one had to bale, fortunately, but the skipper was glad to get past the numerous bald islands and creaming reefs, and tie up at the solid long dock in front of the Hudson's Bay post. Ours was a storm of half an hour. The rain was over, the clouds cleared away and the force of the wind had dropped, by the time the *Keenora* had discharged her freight, and taken on piles of cordwood for her boilers. At most of the points where she called, the deckhands were busy "wooding-up."

The community at Berens River is widely spread out over the rocks—a clump of Indian buildings here, the United Church mission there. Close to the dock, the Hudson's Bay store, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police barracks, and the Provincial Forestry Service. Off a couple of miles is the Roman Catholic mission, and across the water, a little Catholic day-school. On the other side of Berens River is the dock of the Patricia Transportation Company, until recently engaged in hauling mining concentrates.

"Well, there's lots of room," commented the round-faced clerk from the store. "No reason why they should live

huddled together." Perhaps on the whole, sanitation and social serenity are more valuable than companionship. "Too bad you missed seeing the Treaty payment this morning," he went on.

Our party grieved loudly over missing that opportunity. But at least we did catch sight of the "scarlet-coated Mounties" which all the tourist literature promised. Actually, we knew that the scarlet coats are dress-uniform, and worn only on formal occasions.

The Treaty party came over to the dock later, in the *Baldur* the government boat. Indian Agent, Mounted Policeman, government doctor, nurse and X-ray technician had been busy all morning. The treaty money of five dollars per person for all Indians "in treaty" was largely spent by now. Crisp new bills had been counted over by the Indian Agent with the Mountie standing guard, and summoning the payees. Doctor and nurse examined teeth, looked down throats and X-rayed 176 Indians this morning and the previous day.

Treaty no longer means so much to the Indian families, as when it was accompanied by gunshot and a dance, though they still enjoy the occasion. But family allowances have made them rather blasé about the whole thing. The graduated "baby bonus" paid for each child under sixteen years of age, has changed the native outlook. It is paid only where children attend school, if such is possible. Or, where the child lives in residence at a mission school, the payment is made over to the school authorities. The Indians have increased their agitation for more day schools. The fact that their children will live at home, and the money remain under the family's jurisdiction has a bearing.

Through the woods over a well-worn path, we reached the Roman Catholic mission — church, hospital, school and convent. It is a popular stroll with the passengers, and profitable for the Sisters of Mercy who have items of handicraft for sale. In the sewing room we watched Indian children turn out different small crafts, weaving, knitting, sewing, beadwork, skills which will be useful in their later lives.

"We have not many children here today," said the Sister, whose English was strongly accented with French. "Most of them took a holiday for treaty payment."

Some of the passengers had made a bee-line for the Log Inn, a pleasant summer resort with numerous small log cabins. "They offered us *tea*!" moaned the paunchy tourist from Kansas City. The stenographers from Minneapolis were equally disappointed at not being able to pick up souvenirs with the name "Berens River" burned on them.

On the *Keenora* that evening, the minister strung up a sheet at the far end of the saloon. "I've been asked to show some colour slides of a canoe trip," he explained. "That all right with the rest of you?"

It was indeed. And thus we learned that our botanists were going by canoe over the old trade route from Norway House to York Factory. Located at the mouth of the Hayes River on Hudson Bay, York Factory is the oldest settlement in the Province, and is often called "the cradle of the West." We all yearned to go canoeing with them.

"Wanted to go there since I was a kid," the less-taciturn of the two admitted after the show was over. "You know — Kelsey, York boats, Radisson and all that. . . ."

York Factory was originally founded by the business-like Medard des Groseilliers and his volatile companion, Pierre Radisson, in 1682. It was one of those periods when the explorers were at odds with the Hudson's Bay Company. Two years later, Radisson switched his allegiance once more, and took over the fort for the company. Its name honours the Duke of York (later James II) who was at the time Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company. In the following thirty years, sometimes the fort was in French hands, sometimes English, until handed over finally and formally in 1714.

York Factory became an important post in the fur trade. Early in its career, in 1690, Henry Kelsey was sent into the interior to induce the "Assini Poets" (Assiniboiné Indians) to bring their furs to the trading post on Hudson Bay. Kelsey travelled up the Hayes River, through streams and

connecting lakes to reach the wide prairies, where he was the first white man to gaze on the thundering herds of buffalo.

Other explorers followed him. Distinguished travellers journeyed over the route he had pioneered. Selkirk settlers came that way. As settlement increased inland, so did the importance of York Factory, and it became a depot for the western fur trade. Stout York boats built to withstand rough treatment and heavy weather, plied between York Factory and Fort Garry, carrying three to five tons of freight. Imports arrived in the holds of schooners—trade goods of calico and thread, weapons and ammunition, kettles, sugar and tea and tobacco, all in exchange for peltry.

As settlement progressed along the Red River, the cargoes carried by the York brigades grew in volume and variety. Rustling taffeta for the ladies of Fort Garry, violin strings and knocked-down pianos. Crates of flowered china and, even an Old Country gig. Bells for pioneer churches. The bell for St. Andrew's Church rang out a gay air long before it reached its belfry.

Thomas Sinclair, in charge of the brigade, was bringing back to Fort Garry his lovely bride, Caroline Pruden. In honour of the "boss" and his new wife, at the first stopping-place, the boatmen took the bell, hung it to a tree, and rang a chime. Another climbed to the highest tree in the vicinity, and trimmed it to a "lobstick"—leaving only the top branches—to indicate the importance of the event. This all called for the usual "regale" of rum, naturally.

But the traffic was nearly too much for the Hudson's Bay Company officers. James Hargrave, harassed by too many details, wrote in exasperation of "a morning spent in trying to find room and almost in vain, for the pyramid of packages addressed to our well-nursed colony." But the end was in sight. When steel rails reached St. Paul, Minnesota, freight began to come in from the south, instead of from the north. Red River cart, then steamer, then railroad replaced the York boats. Fort Garry replaced York Factory as the main point of distribution. The latter is still supplied by schooner, and some trade goods are transported by barge up

the Hayes River to Shamattawa. But the Great House, known to the Indians as *Gitché Washikigan*, still stands at York Factory beside the trim modern buildings of the trading post.

When the bell rang for breakfast next morning, we were moored to a dock at Warren's Landing, the Mossy Point of early days. The sun glinted across sparkling water, now slightly choppy with a keen wind. Across from the point is a well-established fishing station with numerous blue-grey weathered buildings. Warren's Landing is a fishing station, and back of the fish sheds were the tents of a summer encampment of Indians. Reels for drying nets creaked slightly, most of them bare at that time of day. Plumes of blue smoke drifted up from the tents, and black-eyed youngsters peered around the corners, stealing sidewise glances at the tourists. Dark-faced babies laced in *tiki-agans* (cradle-boards) stared impassively. All on a sudden, a chorus of wails and howls and yelps began.

"Migod! What's that racket?" asked the band-leader from Illinois.

Richard grinned. "Nightingales of the Arctic. Those are huskies dogs chained up along the shore. The Indians camping here for the summer bring their dogs with them, of course."

"Oh, yeah, I've heard that these Indians are cruel to their dogs. Must be beating them nearly to death."

"Not at all. Huskies often carry on like that, especially at feeding time. They'll stop soon." And they did, not a minute later, as suddenly as they had started. We later saw a canoe-load of dogs being towed to camp by the owner in his freight canoe.

While we ate breakfast, the deckhands of the *Keenora* loaded a couple of barges, to be towed down Playgreen Lake next day. A sad young heifer was amongst the freight for Cross Lake, wedged in securely by drums of oil and bales of straw. Loading went on all day, while we passengers journeyed down Playgreen Lake, an expansion of the Nelson River, to historic Norway House. Nelson is named for a

sailing-master who died at the mouth of the river in 1612. Captain Thomas Button, "servant of the Prince of Wales" sailed from Gravesend in April of that year in search of the Western Passage. Many of his crew died during his winter on Hudson Bay.

The first Norway House was built here at Warren's Landing on Mossy Point, at the outlet of Lake Winnipeg. It was only a rude shack, built to shelter a gang of Norwegian axemen brought in to build a winter road from Lake Winnipeg to York Factory. Miles Macdonell, first Governor of Assiniboia, believed that more goods could be carried by horse and sleigh in winter than by York boat in summer. But the road project was soon found to be impracticable.

To this first Norway House, the Selkirk settlers retreated on two different occasions, driven from the farms by the violence of the Nor' Westers. When the first group returned in autumn to harvest any crops that might remain, the Norwegians went with them. Here Sir John Franklin stopped overnight in 1819 on his way to northern explorations and renewed acquaintance with Lord Selkirk's settlers who had left York Factory one day earlier. "These poor people were exceedingly pleased at meeting with us again in this wild country; having accompanied them across the Atlantic, they viewed us in the light of old acquaintances."

The Norwegians' shack was by then used as a trading post. But it burned down in 1824, was replaced the next year by a makeshift store. That lasted only three years, until a new establishment was opened, the present Norway House, twenty miles north on a channel in Little Playgreen Lake.

Big Playgreen Lake—both are expansions of the Nelson River—is a sprawling body of water. But Little Playgreen is much smaller and its shoreline decidedly irregular. "The lake derives its name from a green plain which the Indians frequent to play their great game of ball," Kane explains. Franklin has a somewhat different story. "Playgreen Lake is a translation of the appellation given to that lake by two

bands of Indians, who met and held a festival on an island situated near its centre."

As soon as the second sitting had downed the last drop of coffee, we climbed aboard the launch *Chickama II* ("Okay"), for the shallower waters ahead. The wind had a cutting edge, and those who could find a place in the sun and out of the wind, snuggled into their warmest clothing. The others cravenly made for the large cabin—where we all joined them before long.

It is a lovely jaunt, through a channel that widens and narrows whimsically. At times the shores are very close at hand, "the channel lying between numerous small rocky islands, some of them so near that we could easily have sprung on shore from the vessel." Kane's description still fits. We sat on the sunny side, peeling off jackets. The moment the boat took a turn in the river, which was often, we felt the wind cold, and put our coats back on again. The shores are mostly muddy, though occasionally the granite shoulders do appear. We stopped at one or two small places, one of them a Catholic mission, to unload groceries. There were many small clearings, and little houses with the windows boarded up. We had visions of famine, pestilence

"Thiss iss the Indian Reserve," the quartermaster told us in thick Scandinavian accents. "Them houses isn't really empty, only the Indians iss away fishing, like at Warren's Landing."

We all felt excitement as we rounded the last bend, and there on high rocky Ross Island were the white buildings with their red roofs—Norway House at last. But we paused only to disembark our Mountie and several bags of mail. Then the *Chickama* got up steam once more, and we set out across two miles of water to Rossville. We passed the Provincial Air base, where a forestry plane is located all summer. Opposite it is the island occupied by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police barracks.

"And that's Bull Island right there," the minister pointed out when I asked its location.

It got its name from a tragedy of a century ago. Mr. Isbister of Nelson River post, nearly two hundred miles northwest, was at Norway House on business. He was also waiting for the sloop which was to bring his wife and children back from the Red River settlement. Every day before anyone else was astir, he was down at the landing watching for its sails.

One morning after the staff at Norway House had wakened, stretched, breakfasted and finally sauntered out of doors, they found a bull, one of the cattle belonging to the post, standing over Mr. Isbister's gored and lifeless body. Chief Factor Donald Ross ordered his men to shoot the bull, and take the carcass away and burn it. The men lugged it over to this little island. In a fury of grief and anger, they made such an immense fire that it burnt everything on the island.

Rossville is the Indian settlement, so named in honour of the Chief Factor by its founder, the Reverend James Evans. The collection of shacks and tents he knew has grown to considerable size, with council hall, school, hospital and new United Church. *En masse*, the passengers surged forward to the Hudson's Bay store, deplored the lack of postcards that might be mailed from Norway House, then scattered to explore the village. We went first to see the cairn erected to the indomitable little Wesleyan missionary.

James Evans arrived at Norway House in 1840, when he was appointed Superintendent of Wesleyan Missions in Rupert's Land. He was a man of determined temperament, in fact regarded as "a little odd" by his acquaintances at Norway House. He had such an unorthodox way of travelling, for instance. In Ontario, he had travelled down the Thames from London to St. Clair Lake on a little raft he made with a cabin on top. In the West, his dog team was half-wolf, and famous for its endurance, as was Evans. His tin canoe caused consternation at Norway House. Donald Ross wrote his fellow-factor Hargraves at York Factory, "I would not even cross the river in that *Tin Machine*, not for all the gold that it could carry. It has been re-made here,

and now looks like a canoe, but it will never be a safe craft." Yet it made tremendous journeys across Northern Canada, all the way to the Rockies and back. Evans carried a soldering iron for repairs. The Indians were much impressed, and called it "Island of light."

Impressive though that was, James Evans did a far more miraculous thing. "He made the birchbark talk," the Indians declared. As teacher and missionary, he had had a great deal of experience amongst Indians. For years, he believed that their languages could be set down on paper, using simple characters. After some success in the east, he tried it on the Swampy Cree language, working out a syllabic alphabet. The Indians soon learned to read and write this, using birchbark and charcoal.

Evans was gratified, but not satisfied. He wanted to give them books, something to read. Far from printing presses, he had to rely upon himself. Donald Ross looked askance at this venture, until Evans guaranteed to confine his printing to hymns and translations of the Bible.

Type? He carved a type face of wood with his pocket-knife and a file. He melted lead from bullets and the linings of tea chests to cast it. Ink? He scraped soot from the chimney and mixed it with fish oil. Press? A fur baler which had been used to compress furs for canoe travel.

With such crude implements, the first printing press in Northern Canada, Evans produced 5,000 printed pages, and bound a hundred copies of a sixteen-page hymn book, all on birchbark. The only known copies are treasured in the vaults of Victoria College, Toronto.

The new writing spread throughout the north, and has been adapted to many dialects and languages. Today the Canadian government uses syllabic lettering in its dealings with most of the Indians and Eskimos. Messages written on tree-blazes at the end of a portage are often in syllabic lettering. Letters in these short-hand characters travel amongst the Eskimos, or are passed from hand to hand amongst the Indians. Hymn books, dictionaries, the Scriptures, posters and pamphlets have been printed in the

syllabic type. Small wonder that Norway House is as known for this invention as for its lucrative fur trade.⁷

But the missionary had one notable failure, as recorded in the *Letters of Letitia Hargrave*. A wanton woman, Mrs. Turner, had come out as servant for one of the company's families, but had soon been dismissed as unsatisfactory. The Rev. James Evans took her into service, and tried to reform her, but without success. He was forced to send her on to York Factory to get the next ship for England. It was a time of great trial for James Hargrave, who wrote crisply to his friend Donald Ross:

Aye, you have sent me a fine specimen of morals in your export of the Madam Turner. I wish the ship would come were it only that I could be rid of her—also I fear there may be heads broken for her yet, before she leaves. In a flame-coloured gown, she flounces at all hours through our men's houses, and if it does not set something else on fire, 'tis neither her nor its fault.

After forty-five minutes at Rossville, which was nicely geared to our span of interest, we returned to the *Chickama*. Lunch was served on the launch in the big cabin, a laundry-size wicker hamper filled to the brim with sandwiches, cakes and pie. In warm weather, the picnic lunch is spread on the clean rocks under the pines at Norway House.

"Oh, just finished in time," murmured the gentle white-haired librarian from Minnesota. "Here we are back at Norway House. I'm so anxious to see all the historical things there."

Norway House still has its attractive white buildings grouped around a quadrangle of lawn, though not as many of them as formerly. The modern little store has only a few signs of the frontier about it, except for its customers. A clerk told me of one who had flown in yesterday from God's Lake to buy black sateen and black lace to line his father's coffin. But here at last, the tourists found enough souvenirs to satisfy them, and rid themselves of the loose change that seemed to be "burning holes in their pockets."

An archway leads through the principal storehouse to the boardwalks beyond. Squared log buildings of considerable size still remain, though they may come down as being too dilapidated for repair. Bachelor's Hall and the Pork Warehouse have had their day. But the former will not be forgotten. For here young "Rab" (R. M.) Ballantyne served his apprenticeship with the company, storing away adventures and northern lore for the imaginative books he was to write for boys. Rab was a likeable boy, but woefully inaccurate. Donald Ross regretfully admitted that to "leave any business with Ballantyne, even for a day, is to throw it into inextricable confusion."

An apprentice whom the Chief Factor could like and respect, was sixteen-year-old Bernard Ross (no relation). Like most young recruits, he served a year's apprenticeship at Norway House to become initiated into the work he would have to do in the company's service. In that winter, Bernard became very attached to the Factor's daughter, Christina Ross, a child of six. For fourteen years, he corresponded with the family, and then Christina travelled over the long route into the North West Territories. She and Bernard were married under a tree at the east end of Portage la Loche. It was the beginning of a long and happy companionship.

The oldest building on the island is the 1838 powder magazine, which is still standing, though shakily. Well back from the main buildings, it is sometimes used as a stable for horses nowadays. Closer at hand is the old jail, the date over its door, 1855. "Certainly wouldn't want to be put in there," shuddered one of our party, staring at the thick walls of the little stone building.

"Oh well, they never kept anyone there in the winter," said the post manager with a laugh. "They'd have frozen to death." And back he went to his work in the office, much to our disappointment.

Above the Archway Warehouse is a historic bell, bearing the words: "*Ship Sea Horse*. Launched March 30th, 1782. Hudson's Bay Company." That was all we could learn about

it, but the thirteen-year-old from South Bend, Indiana, got permission to climb a shaky ladder and ring the old bell. Another historic item is the Franklin sundial, standing in the centre of the grassy square. Presumably this is the one made by the Franklin party while wintering at Cumberland House in 1819-1820.

There are also two monuments at the post, both on the granite rocks to the north of the store and near the flagpole from which flies the company flag, the red ensign with the initials HBC. The cairn of large round beach stones set up by the Historical Sites and Monuments Committee reads:

Norway House. Built on Jack River 1812-13 by the Hudson's Bay Company. It was rebuilt on this site in 1825, and was a frequent meeting place of the Council of Northern Department of Rupertsland. Here the Rev. Jas. Evans invented the Cree syllabic system. In 1875 Treaty No. 5 was made here whereby the Saulteaux and Swampy Crees ceded their rights in about 100,000 square miles in this vicinity.

The other monument, smaller and plainer and made of limestone tells a more intimate story. It was set up by the commissioned officers of the Hudson's Bay Company in memory of Horace Belanger, Chief Factor, who was drowned here in 1892. Stanley Simpson, a clerk tried desperately to save the life of "his Master and Friend," but in doing so, drowned as well. Both lie buried in the little cemetery on Playgreen Island, directly across the channel. There, too, are the graves of nine Eskimos. Stricken with polio, they were being carried down to Winnipeg for hospital treatment in 1949, when the plane crashed, killing every person aboard, including nurse and crew.

The wind whistled through the jackpines with their orange tips, and whispered in the wild grasses. It nodded the petals of a little white flower blooming in the crevices. "*Saxifraga tricuspidata*" said the botanist when I asked him. They were the only two words I ever heard him say. He just smiled when one of the passengers pointed out the lichens

of grey, black, green and brown and brilliant orange. "It looks like someone splashed paint around. Or is it mineral?"

Perhaps he felt as I did, that the ghosts of Norway House were more potent than the brisk flesh-and-blood people around him. It would have been only fitting to hear the skirl of bagpipes on the wind, preceding Governor Simpson's gaily-painted express canoe around the bend. For a century ago, Norway House was a famous outfitting centre, midway between York Factory and Fort Garry, and here Simpson met with the Northern Council. In its heyday, Norway House was the centre of the transport system in the West. It was built on a generous scale to lodge the numerous officers and servants of the company who had to stop over, and it was the training ground for apprentices.

Sir George Simpson knew the value of a dramatic entrance as well as any debutante. He travelled in a brilliant express canoe, painted at both ends, paddles stained with vermilion. His canoemen were picked for their speed, endurance and daring. Before he reached any post, he gave his staff a few minutes to don gala attire. Then with the voyageurs singing, or a piper droning on the bagpipes, the canoe swept up to the landing place. A salute was fired, and followed by a regale of rum to the canoemen.

The Indians were tremendously impressed—but no more than their white brethren. Sir George in his tall beaver hat, propelled through the wilderness, dictating notes to his hard-working secretary, is one of the finest figures of Canadian history. "The Little Emperor of the North", they called him in affectionate respect.

If the Indians loved the pageantry, they were practically overwhelmed by Colin Fraser and his bagpipes. He was the Governor's personal piper, and accompanied him on his long voyages for several years. Paul Kane met him on his travels:

He carried the pipes with him, dressed in his Highland costume. And when stopping at forts or wherever he found Indians, the bagpipes were put into requisition much to the astonishment of the natives, who supposed him to be a relation of the Great Spirit, having of course, never beheld

so extraordinary a looking man, or such a musical instrument, which astonished them as much as the sound produced. One of the Indians asked him to intercede with the Great Spirit for him; but Frazer remarked the petitioner little thought how limited his influence was in that quarter.

But there was no sound of bagpipes nor *chansons* on the wind. Instead came the whistle from the *Chickama*. Passengers straggled down to the wharf. At Playgreen Inn, half a mile south, vacationists returning from a couple of weeks' holidays boarded the launch. We rejoined the *Keenora*, still busy with freight at Warren's Landing. Only now it was loading, for a consignment of five grey freighter canoes was being returned to Winnipeg—sent to the wrong address. "Some clerk's gonna get hell for that," remarked the captain.

In the darkness, the *Keenora* steamed across the seventy miles from Warren's Landing to Grand Rapids. In the morning we went down the corridors to find Indian women from the village with displays of beautiful white moccasins, beaded and embroidered gauntlets, and some utterly charming white feathered hats which looked like frosted cakes. "Ah-h-h!" sighed the tourists happily.

Grand Rapids itself looks utterly peaceful and pretty, with its little white houses peering out from the trees. It was, however, too muddy to walk, for it had begun to rain early that morning. Even so, there would not have been time to go two miles up the Saskatchewan River to see the rapids which gave the place its name. Here "the Saskatchewan forms a sudden bend, works its way through a narrow channel deeply worn into the limestone strata," as Sir John Franklin described it.

Paul Kane saw the rapids with an artist's eye, and wrote with more detail:

The whole brigade shot down them, a distance of three and a half miles. No rapid in the whole course of navigation on the eastern side of the mountains is at all to be compared to this in point of velocity, grandeur or danger to the navigator. The brigade flies down as if impelled by a hurri-

cane, many shipping a good deal of water in the perpendicular leaps which they often have to take in the descent. The whole course is one white sheet of foam from one end to the other.

This was the impression of a man who had travelled by canoe from Toronto clear to the Pacific Coast and back again! Going up was a far more difficult matter. After many years, a wooden railway was installed along the portage, and little cars ran on it. It used to be great sport for the tourists on the cruise ship to run the rapids with Indian canoemen. Until one tourist rashly got drowned and spoiled the sport for all the rest.

As in the days of long ago, pelicans and brown eagles still haunt the seething waters at the foot of the cascade, fishing with great success. We saw several of these immense white birds, as they flapped off lazily back from the lakeshore for another little snack at the rapids.

That afternoon, the Second Mate had his crew busy threading new lines through the links in the lifeboats. Each loop had a little cork float, so that the rope would lie out on the water, and thus be easy to grasp in case of necessity. The crew spent a couple of hours learning how to take their places in the lifeboats quickly. There was further drill the next day.

The evening was fun.

"Say, why don't we have a square dance?" suggested a travelling salesman. "We could easily hold it down on the deck or here in the saloon. Let's ask the skipper."

Captain Hokansson was agreeable. He arranged that one of the Indian crew would "call off," and another supply the music. "There'll be dancing from nine until ten o'clock this evening," he said as he passed through the saloon at dinner-time. "Can't keep the men off the job too long."

So while Ed called off in low tones that were hard to hear and harder to follow, Alec, the brawny fireman, sawed away at his fiddle. It lasted for three sets, then the boys shyly drifted out the door for a smoke and vanished. We saw them no more. But we went on with waltzes and a

ragtime two-step. From there the evening developed into a sing-song, to bridge games, and finally down in the darkened corridor into a story-telling session that lasted far past midnight.

At Gull Harbour the next day, there was time and to spare for lifeboat drill, which didn't include the passengers. I couldn't decide whether we were to remain inert in emergency and let ourselves be rescued, or whether the crew was planning to abandon ship safely. "Ah, we'll look after you," said the skipper re-assuringly. We watched them lower one of the boats, row it around for a while, learning to back-water, up oars, steer and so forth. Then the lifeboat had to be hauled back up into position.

"Yol!" shouted the mate. The men hauled on the lines.

"This calls for sea chanties," I suggested laughing.

"Just so they get the boat up, that's all I ask," returned the skipper, never taking his eyes off the lines. The quartermaster stood nearby, giving it the same concentration.

"Good show," the travelling salesman said.

"It iss a darn nuisance," growled the quartermaster.

The salesman laughed. "Which—the passengers chipping in, or the drill?"

"Oh," shocked and serious, "the passengers iss all right!"

At Hecla, we picked up the Icelandic Lutheran Ladies Aid again. We had roamed around the little village, and it seemed a strange place to hold a convention.

"We tried the city once," admitted Mrs. Bjarnson, "but all the ladies said 'Never again!' We'd rather go to some small place like this—most of us don't live in town you see. And the people like to have us. Thirty-fourty families wanted to take in guests. Oh, yes, we had a wonderful convention. We had to decide whether we should continue to hold the meetings entirely in the Icelandic language or in English. So we voted to let the delegates speak whichever language they wished, but to keep the minutes in English."

This had called for a great deal of discussion, indeed.

"Some of the older ladies didn't like it at all—they thought we were going to forget our own tongue. My mother-in-law

wouldn't speak English at home, not if she died for it. Then after my little girl was born, she was so afraid that the baby wouldn't understand Icelandic, she speaks to her only in English!"

By evening we were back at Netley Marsh, passing the old lighthouses at the entrance to Red River. A lovely sunset spread a palette of colours over the flats. On a sandbar crowded a flock of big white birds, immensely big compared with the gulls. Pelicans, birds with a wingspread up to eight and nine feet.

"A wondrous bird is the pelican," quoted the doctor's wife from Detroit, "His mouth holds more than his bellican.

He takes in his beak

Enough food for a week . . .

"But I'm damned if I see how the hellican." Her husband finished the limerick.

At ten o'clock we reached Selkirk. Many of the passengers in a hurry to get to Winnipeg left the boat, caught the bus, and hustled off for their city homes. It was a quiet evening on board ship then, with card games, quiet talk, desultory reading of magazines that had been left behind. The trip was nearly over, having lasted just the right length of time, so that we felt that pleasant reluctance at parting at the Redwood Dock next morning.

4

Loop to the East

Bird's Hill—Cook's Creek—Winnipeg River—Whiteshell
Dawson Road

EAST OF WINNIPEG lies a diverse region. There is the deep black prairie soil, rich farming land. There are ridges of sand and limestone. In the southeast are low lands of bogs and bulrushes. And over against the Ontario border, the Laurentian Shield bares its granite shoulders.

Out north along Main Street, we turned sharply to cross the Redwood Bridge into the municipality of East Kildonan, then turned north again on the Henderson Highway. The winding pavement on the east bank of the Red River is very pleasant to follow. Attractive little homes have generous gardens, gardens that are evidently loved and lived in, to judge by the amount of outdoor furniture. These give way to small farms.

Some of these belong to Ukrainian and Russian farmers, and here and there appear the onion-shaped-turrets of their churches. The muddled houses, painted in various pastel tones, are steadily being replaced by modern white frame homes. Less picturesque, perhaps, but more sanitary. The buildings they replace are used as stables for cows or poultry. Or sometimes Grandmother lives there by herself—she likes the old ways better.

In a lovely stretch of woods, we reached the turn-off to Bird's Hill. This forest was part of the 3,000-acre estate

owned by the retired Chief Factor, James Curtis Bird, in the early days of the Red River settlement. At Bird's Hill village, we saw one car after another arriving. We suspected a celebration of some kind, but soon discovered the reason. An old gravel pit close to the village has filled with fresh clean water from the artesian wells below, and forms a little lake about two hundred yards in length, and half as wide.

"Nice Sunday like this, there'll be a coupla hundred cars here," one picnicker informed us. "Swell place for swimming. Only we got to warn the kids to watch for the springs. Gravel rolls there all the time, and they might lose their footing." We watched youngsters and grown-ups splashing around in the pond and regretted that we couldn't stay, too. Then by following our picnicker's directions, we found our way to Hudson's Bay Company fur farm.

W. O. Douglas, manager of the farm, is a big hearty ex-Mountie, who can spin wondrous tails. He now oversees the welfare of hundreds of mink and fox of all mutations. In addition to the fur ranching which has been both profitable and prize-winning, the farm takes time for experiment. Martens are being ranch-raised, though notoriously hard to propagate. Fisher, an animal highly valued for its large sleek pelt but growing scarcer in the woodlands, is here cultivated. And the Canada lynx with tufted ears and bearded chin, is a guest of honour.

"We've had three litters of kits bred and born in captivity here," said Mr. Douglas. "Never heard of that happening anywhere else, though sometimes you hear of lynx kittens born shortly after the mother was taken from the wild." He managed to get hold of a kitten for our inspection. Its round innocent baby face was much like that of a house cat, but black hairs were already forming tufts on its ears.

"Are the pelts valuable enough to justify ranching lynx?" we wondered.

He smiled. "Well, no, they're not, to tell the truth. At least not at present prices. But in the world of fashion you never can tell what furs are going to be up, and which are

going to be down. Look at the way fox fur has fluctuated in recent years—and even the finest mink. We want to be ready with the necessary information on all these different kinds of fur-bearers, how to ranch them and so forth, when the time comes that we need such knowledge."

The martens darted up and down their cages like streaks of brown lightning, incessantly on the move. The fishers, bigger and heavier, were more inclined to curl up in the swinging hollow boxes. But when they felt like moving, it was as swift as any marten, swifter indeed, for in the wilds they are known to overtake these smaller animals, an almost incredible feat. The fishers are fierce animals, about a yard from nose to tip of tail, and absolutely fearless.

"It doesn't pay to take chances with those blood-thirsty fellows," Mr. Douglas told us. "Once one of our men was knocked flat when a fisher leaped on to his shoulders. Luckily another workman was close by, and he dashed into the pen and drove off the fisher. It would have torn his throat open in no time."

Amusing friends on the ranch are the old white horse and what appears to be an equally venerable goat. Goat milk is used in the mink diet instead of cow's milk. Mr. Douglas is convinced that its qualities account for that extra sheen on the pelts.

As we left the fur farm, we could hear the sound of church bells from across the plain. They must be from the large Ukrainian church over toward Cook's Creek, we decided. Turning a little north on a sideroad, we soon reached the Church of St. John the Baptist. Father Phillippe Ruh, architect and priest, was born in Alsace, but has become a leading light amongst Canada's Ukrainian congregations. The church at Cook's Creek is the largest and most ornate of the twenty-odd churches he has built. Those at Edmonton, Alberta, and St. Catharines, Ontario, are close seconds.

This massive building is of stone, much ornamented with geometric designs and topped with nine cupolas, each with its cross. The highest dome stands 110 feet above the ground.

The belfry, according to custom, stands separate in a corner of the grounds. Three huge bells are a gift of the peasants of Alsace-Lorraine in France. When they heard of the church that was to be built, and that there was no money for bells, they collected their francs. Their generosity outstripped the building fund. The bells arrived six weeks after Father Ruh returned to his parish at Cook's Creek. Contrary to all previous ecclesiastical history in Manitoba, here were the bells and no church to go with them! Obviously, the church must be built, and at once. Since 1938 the parishioners, men, women and children, have joined in the work, and the church is almost completed. Carpentry, masonry, painting, embroidering, lacework . . . ninety per cent of the work was done by the devoted hands of the people themselves. The finished church will have fifteen altars.

Climbing back into the car, we drove north to join Highway 1 near Garson and Tyndall, where the famous Tyndall stone is quarried. This limestone is very old rock, full of fossils and seaweed tapestry. The quarries were silent this Sabbath day, but we could see the rock marked out into rectangles for cutting.

At Beauséjour, a road streaks north to the summer resorts on the east shore of Lake Winnipeg, where the huge waves crash in over the gravel. Grand and Victoria Beaches are quiet residential colonies, rather than amusement beaches. Beauséjour was named by the French, who had found it a pleasant camping-ground. The name has stayed with the settlement which grew up. Beyond the neat town with its white houses, its trees and its grain elevators, the road crosses Brokenhead River, once Manitoba's eastern boundary. A tourist park beside the winding river looks charming, promising "*un beau séjour*" to anyone who stops there. Poplar and ash trees on the banks lean over to see themselves reflected in the quiet water.

The road beyond lured us into trailing it north alongside the Winnipeg River. It rose and fell over the lower edge of the Laurentian Shield, a solid forest of jackpine, poplar and spruce finding root in the thin soil over the granite bedrock.

The Winnipeg River was for generations the highway of the voyageurs, those hardy swaggering French-Canadian canoe-men who carried the wares of the fur-trading companies through thousands of miles of uncharted wilderness.

From Lake Superior, they made their way through a chain of lakes and streams, over short and long portages around rough water, to the Lake of the Woods. From the north end of the lake, the Winnipeg River drains out in falls and rapids through a tortuous course to reach Lake Winnipeg. "Indeed one of the most picturesque rivers we had passed on the whole route," Paul Kane noted.

La Vérendrye was the first white man to record this route, unless perchance the vague writings of Radisson refer to it. La Vérendrye built a chain of trading posts between Lake Superior and Lake Winnipeg, and also on the Red River.

William Francis Butler was more than appreciative. He was enthusiastic over this river, as he wrote in his witty and observant *Great Lone Land*:

To say that the Winnipeg River has an immense volume of water, that it descends 360 feet in a distance of 160 miles, that it is full of eddies and whirlpools of every variation from chutes to cataracts, that it expands into lovely pine-cliffed lakes and far-reaching island-studded bays, that its bed is cumbered with immense wave-polished rocks, that its vast solitudes are silent and its cascades ceaselessly active — to say all this is but to tell in bare items of fact the narrative of its beauty . . . Glorious, glorious Winnipeg!

Many of those rapids and falls around which Butler and the voyageurs had to portage, are now dammed up to supply power for Manitoba's industries, for her towns and cities, her rural electrification projects. The cost is amongst the lowest on the continent. Slave Falls which has long supplied the city of Winnipeg with hydro-electric energy, was the highest on the route, and occurred in what is now the Whiteshell Forest Reserve. Butler with a keen nose for a story, ferreted out the legend which Paul Kane had missed:

Slave Falls tells by its name the fate of two Sioux captives taken in some fray by the Ojibbeway; lashed together in a

canoe, they were the only men who ever ran the Grand Chute. The rocks around were black with the figures of the Ojibbeways, whose wild triumphant yells were hushed by the roar of the cataract; the torture was a short one; the mighty rush, the wild leap, and the happy hunting grounds, where even Ojibbeways cease from troubling and Sioux warriors are at rest, had been reached.

Farther downstream, and not far from Highway 1 was the Seven Sisters Falls, where the dreaded seven portages plagued the canoemen. They avoided it whenever they could. If the water were high enough, the voyageurs took Pinawa Channel to Lac du Bonnet, since it had fewer portages. But the Seven Sisters have lost their fury—and their looks—being dammed back, for a hydro-electric development which is one of the largest in Western Canada.

Lac du Bonnet is a small town on the shore of the lake of that name (actually an expansion of the Winnipeg River). "It derives its name," wrote Alexander Mackenzie, "from the custom the Indians have of crowning stones, laid in a circle on the highest rock of the portage, with wreaths of herbage and branches." In translation, it was called Cap Lake—and sometimes misspelled Cat Lake. The town is a focal point for sport fishing and hunting in the lake country of eastern Manitoba. It is also a base for flights heading into the north, carrying mail for remote settlements back in the hinterland.

Lac du Bonnet is also headquarters of the Manitoba Government Air Service, with its shortwave radio network linking twenty odd stations in the northern part of the Province. It is the main seaplane base of the half-dozen in the Service, distributed throughout the Province as at Norway House, Cormorant Lake and Berens River. The Air Service assists all departments of the government. It may be called upon for forest patrol in time of forest fire hazard; to convey government parties in to remote areas; to restock fish and game areas, and not least, for mercy flights.

In cases of suspected epidemic, in sudden illness or accident, radio messages speed across the air waves. Some-

times instruction for treatment is sufficient. Otherwise an air ambulance is soon on the wing. If the patient is too ill to be moved to a hospital, the doctor is brought to the bedside. A radio message brought word of an Indian child who had fallen backwards into a camp fire, and was badly burned. An aircraft with a nurse from the Indian Health Service had the little patient safely in hospital within four hours.

Below Lac du Bonnet at Great Falls, the river has been impounded for the white gold of electric energy. Silver Falls had so far escaped that fate. A wide shelving series of white-water cascades, the Winnipeg tumbled two-and twenty feet, a sheet of silver foam. It was truly a lovely spot, and we ate our lunch in a little picnic area, listening to the roar of the falling waters. A few jackpines graced the edge, their new growth standing up like Christmas candles at the tip of every branch. All was as the voyageurs themselves would have remembered it. For this was one of the portages that had to be made, one of the twenty-seven places on the Winnipeg River where the canoemen carried their packs around the foaming water. Here, too, they had to carry their canoes on their shoulders, not merely *à décharge* where the canoes could be lined along the shore with ropes.

Piles of spruce, balsam and poplar were stacked up along the road here and there, the winter occupation of most of the men of the neighbourhood. Their destination was Pine Falls, a few miles down river. This is an attractive company town built by the Manitoba Paper Company. Towering piles of pulpwood beside the plant await their turn to be ground into mash. This is the Province's one pulp and paper mill, and produces 350 tons of newsprint per day. Just recently, an even larger power project has been developed at Pine Falls, one which drowns out Silver Falls, and the site of the village of St. George.

North of Pine Falls and linked only by a tractor trail in winter-time are the San Antonio and Gunnar gold mines. The former is on the Wanipigon River at Bissett. Supplies for these mines are air-freighted in summer from Lac du

Bonnet, and hauled in caterpillar trains in winter from Pine Falls.

We lacked time to follow the little dirt track on to Fort Alexander, believed to be the site of La Vérendrye's second Fort Maurepas. But no early traveller would pass there without stopping, for it was famous for its hospitality, as were most of the fur-trading posts. It became later a North West Company post, and the name was changed. Today it is part of an Indian Reserve, and has a large Roman Catholic mission school. In 1846, Paul Kane took advantage of an overnight stop there to record one more scene in the life of the Canadian West:

The evening was very beautiful, and soon after we had pitched our tents and lighted our fires, we were visited by some Saulteaux Indians. As I had plenty of time, I sketched the encampment. Our visitors, the clear stream reflecting the brilliant sky so peculiar to North America, the granite rocks backed by the rich foliage of the woods, with Indians and voyageurs moving about, made a most pleasing subject.

Retracing our way, we rejoined Highway 1, and drove east to the village of Rennie, on the edge of Manitoba's eastern playground, the Whiteshell Forest Reserve. The highway cuts across the lower portion of the area.

"How does it happen that sometimes the maps call it a Forest Reserve, and sometimes a Provincial Park?" we asked Mr. Ritchie, the superintendent. His home and offices are at Rennie, in a small corner of the sprawling Whiteshell, but we met him over a cup of coffee at the little café across from the hotel.

"Well, the government is making it a park," he said. "It's been a Forest Reserve for many years now, but it's getting more and more popular as a vacation area. It's a game preserve, too—that is, south of the railway tracks. Good deer and duck hunting in the right season. You're likely to see wild life anytime in the Whiteshell."

The Whiteshell is a playground of a thousand square miles, set apart by the Manitoba Government for the relaxation of its people. The forests have been wisely reaped in

the past years, forming a source of income.—But its main appeal is recreation for the people of the Province, and their neighbours from the south and east.

Just east of Rennie, we turned north in the Reserve, crossing two sets of railway tracks. The road winds north through a forest of jackpine, spruce, poplar and some hardwoods. Arctic cotton bloomed with fluffy white heads. There was the white of Labrador tea, the pink of wild roses, and the ground was starred with the white bracts of dwarf cornel, or bunchberry. Here for the first time we met the yellow cowslip—not to be confused with the marsh marigold. Driving up past Brereton Lake with its youth camps, we could see how the park is appreciated. Many cottages had gone up at Brereton and Red Rock Lakes since our first visit two years before. But space has been reserved for public camping grounds.

A Forest Fire Hazard Research Station and a Forest Insects Investigation Station indicated that the government had by no means lost interest in the trees. Insects are the silent insidious enemies of the forest, and their unobtrusive destruction costs more in the aggregate than the spectacular forest fire. The larch sawfly, spruce budworm, and in Sandilands, the jackpine budworm are the major insect pests in Manitoba today. The Manitoba Forest Service in collaboration with Dominion Entomological Laboratories and the Forest Insect Survey of the University of Manitoba, work ceaselessly to gather information and data to control such pests.

The Whiteshell Forest Reserve is a maze of rocks, trees and waterways. "Uncounted miles of river, churning over rocks, smoothing out into lakes, tangling with wild rice and slipping free again," one enthusiast described it. Canoeists love it.

At Jessica Lake we met one of these. "My husband and I come here every chance we get," she confided. "We've canoed through most of the lakes by now, but we love to see them again. And of course, the fishing's very good."

You can take a canoe from Jessica, she told us, down

through the winding Whiteshell River to Lone Island Lake. This shallow lake has acres of wild rice, ideal duck country and the ducks know it. From there the river leads into Little Whiteshell, and then into Big Whiteshell Lake. It's only a short portage into Crow Duck Lake, the largest and most beautiful of the many lakes in the park. Since it is accessible only by canoe, its numerous beaches of fine brown sand, hard-packed by wave action, are private and alluring.

"But there are all kinds of canoe routes in Whiteshell," she went on. "Most of them start at Caddy Lake, because it's close to the highway. Then the course leads through a rock canyon with its walls all scabbed over with rock tripe and other lichens, and into South Lake, which is narrow and shallow. Another rock cut at the far end leads you into beautiful North Lake, with its rock shores. They're awfully steep in some places, and sloping in others—just right for a camp fire. It has brown—no, amber—water, dammed back at Sailing Lake. But it's only a short portage of thirty yards, hardly any effort at all."

She made it sound so alluring that we felt a distaste for travelling by car. Nonetheless, we climbed in again, and followed the road beyond Jessica to pretty little Rainbow Falls. There the road forked, the right branch swinging on to Big Whiteshell Lake, the left curving off to Rennie River.

Much as we wanted to see the lake, we wanted far more to go west. For there lay the Indian mosaics, symmetrical figures outlined in stones, of which we had seen photographs and drawings in the Provincial Museum. This road was under construction, and will eventually link with that coming in from the west near Seven Sisters Falls. Tons and tons of earth have been scooped up from one place to be laid down in another. Broad "borrow" ditches run beside the road, and are quite necessary for drainage. In places the road leads through real marshes, with pickerel weed standing ankle-deep, with duckweed, rushes and swamp grass only thinly hiding the water. Large and small ducks floated or loafed in many of the waters — mallards, ruddies and mergansers.



"There should be a pile of cordwood marking the entrance of a tote-road," Mr. Ritchie had instructed us. "You go in there, and you'll come to some bald rock with little dabs of trees here and there, and you'll very likely see the rocks you're looking for. If you miss that pile of cordwood, go right to the end of the road at Rennie River, and then come back half a mile."

We found the woodpile without going on to the river. It did indeed mark the entrance to the mosaic boulder field. We padded over the springy forest floor, the air fragrant with the tang of evergreen trees, then came out into a clearing. It is an open area of flat rock ridges, absolutely bare for the most part. But where a fault in the rock has trapped a little dust, jackpines lead a meagre existence.

Rocks! They are everywhere, sitting on top of the flat bedrock. How could one possibly recognize a pattern in them? We couldn't for quite a time. The mosaics are isolated stones, placed so that they form the outline of turtle or serpent, usually. Sometimes it is difficult to tell what they are meant to represent, and in some cases, rocks have been moved from their original position, and the design is forever lost.

"Some of them have been used by survey crews," said my husband pointing to a cairn. "Too bad they weren't cemented down or fenced off in some way."

We found the largest figure first. It is in the shape of a very large snake, stretching about three hundred feet from flat triangular rock which forms its head to the tapering stones which dwindle off into the tail. It twists back upon itself, forming the letter "S." The stones are lichen above and around, and erosion has worn little hollows into the bedrock beneath, so that the stones fit in perfectly.

Over in another bare spot, we found two distinct patterns, those of a serpent and a turtle, nose to nose. Though much smaller, there is no mistaking what they portray. But most of the stones are so overgrown with moss and lichens that often it is hard to decide whether there really is a design

there or not. I was sure one was a bear, but Richard couldn't see it.

We had plied Mr. Norris-Elye of the Provincial Museum with questions about the mosaics. He admitted that little was known about them anywhere, and that they occurred farther west in the Province and into Saskatchewan, as well as in the north-central States.

"It is not even certain that the designs were created by the Ojibways," said he. "It might be Cree workmanship, or even a prehistoric race. There is a decided lack of archeological evidence to link them with any tribe, for practically nothing of the customary bones and fragments of tools have been found. The conclusion, still very much open to question, is that perhaps it was a fetish of individual medicine-men. The mosaics occur in different parts of the Whiteshell, pre-supposing different medicine-men to have their own private shrines."

Back on Highway 1, we continued east, through the Whiteshell. Lily Pad Lake was golden with yellow spatterdock thrusting its waxy bloom up amidst round flat leaves. We saw a turtle crossing the road, and took time to hurry him up lest he become a traffic casualty. A road leads off south to Falcon Lake. Our road skirted the south shore of West Hawk Lake, a favourite summering resort. This has very attractive public camping grounds in addition to its many cottages. Star Lake lies opposite on the south side of the road.

We continued on to the Ontario boundary, passing the quarries of the Winnitoba Granite Company. A flicker undulated along ahead of us, and a blue jay screamed across the road, a splash of gay colour in blue, black and white. A white-tailed deer bounded across, and disappeared amongst the mountain ash thickets. We hoped it would remember to stay south of the railroad tracks next fall. Then best of all, just before we reached the Provincial boundary, I caught sight of a large brown form in the trees, a figure with huge palmated antlers—a bull moose in the

pride of full growth. It stood and stared a moment, then crashed noisily away through the trees.

And then we were at the Manitoba-Ontario border, a straight slash, twenty feet in width, marching up through the trees and over the hills and out of sight. The boundary survey, begun in 1897, was finally completed early in 1948, and Manitoba was diminished by a few acres of swampy land up near Hudson Bay. Smack on the boundary stands a little cairn, commemorating the opening of this highway in 1932. The Manitoba coat-of-arms with flag and bison is on the west side of the plaque, Ontario's heraldic deer rampant on the east side. The black bison on Manitoba's road signs is replaced immediately beyond the cairn by the crown on Ontario's signs. The road curves on east, thirty miles to Kenora, the Rat Portage of the fur brigades.

We turned back then, and retraced our way almost to Whitemouth, where a rambling road leads south through Elma. Here are the prairies again, the wide stretches of open country, with its consequent change in the type of living. Gone are the boulders and the granite bedrock, the pulp-cutters and miners and stonemasons. Here is the deep rich prairie soil, dramatically black between rows of young crops.

Elma and the country round about it are populated mostly by Canadians of Ukrainian extraction, to judge by the scarves around the women's heads, by the muddled architecture of the neat little cottages, and by the rounded towers of the churches. The village itself is full of tiny houses, some very modern, others of early construction. Sometimes the mud is slapped on over laths, sometimes over poles. Usually it is washed in pastel tones, with blue (for the Virgin Mary) predominating. Almost always the yard is enclosed by a tall picket or slashboard fence, a transplant from the closed villages of the Ukraine.

There are the long woodpiles, ready for winter or for the cooking of big meals for the harvest hands. Nearly every household has a martin house atop a tall pole. Even the pink farmhouse trimmed with blue, a demonstration farm, and the salmon-pink house at the rear, have their

birdhouses. Shallow wells with unwieldy heavy sweeps form the source of water on many of these farms.

Through Medika with the strange lettering over its community hall. Then through Reynolds, formerly known as Hadashville, after its first postmaster. Some of the older farmhouses wear sod roofs, with grass growing out of it. Many barns and stables have a roof of straw, piled on anyhow. Here we crossed the 110-mile railway of the Greater Winnipeg Water District; which runs from Winnipeg to Shoal Lake, an arm of Lake of the Woods.

Our road now became the Dawson Road.

The historic route, most of which is abandoned today, was laid out from Port Arthur (then Prince Arthur's Landing) on Lake Superior, to Winnipeg (then Fort Garry) a distance of 530 miles. This land-and-water route was Canada's first attempt to provide an all-Canadian highway linking the East with the Prairies. Simon George Dawson surveyed the route for the Province of Upper Canada (Ontario) in 1858. But development of the West was the thing that really pushed the work through. For in the 1860's, the West was opening up to settlement. Immigrants were travelling via St. Paul, then north along the Red River in carts and paddlewheel steamers. But high freight rates and high-powered salesmanship persuaded many of the settlers for the Canadian West to make their homes in Minnesota. When in 1868, the transfer of Rupert's Land was agreed upon, the roadwork was begun, partly as a public works relief measure.

Paymaster on the immigrant road was a brash young man from Ontario, something of a writer — written a play about Tecumseh, hadn't he? Charles Mair was, in fact, first native-born of Canadian dramatists, and already very sure of his judgments. He wrote letters and articles on the life of the Red River settlement for the *Globe* in Toronto, some of them anything but tactful. His critical comments finally got back to Red River, and the half-breed ladies whom he had maligned, showed him their mettle. He who got slapped was

the thankless writer who had been guest in their homes, and thus abused their hospitality. That'd teach him!

All work ceased on the road when the Provisional Government took office. Unfinished though it was, much of the route was followed by Colonel Wolseley and his military force. A wagon road led from Port Arthur to Shebandowan Lake, now a good secondary highway. Thence by small steamers and barges, the route followed across numerous lakes and down rivers, with wagon roads on the portages, to Manitoba territory on the west side of Lake of the Woods. This was in a reedy bay called by the fur brigades, the North-West Angle. The term has since been applied to the marshy peninsula which belongs to Minnesota, though isolated from that State. In 1824, David Thompson put up a monument of oak and aspen logs to indicate his survey lines. But only a few bits of rotten wood remained when sought by the International Boundary Commission in 1872-1876.

At North-West Angle the Dawson Road commenced again, and wagons were provided to carry settlers the remaining hundred and thirty miles across sandy land and bogs and prairie gumbo to the Red River settlements. Posts were established every twenty miles, where travellers could get meals and stop overnight. The route crossed what is now the Sandilands Forest Reserve to Ste. Anne des Chênes (then Oak Point) through a sandy land of scrub oak trees, then swung north to Fort Garry.

The Dawson Road served its purpose briefly and not too badly, though it was a rugged journey and tedious in the extreme. But it contrasted poorly in the minds of settlers with the comparatively easy method of taking the train from Duluth. Neither means of travel was strictly for pleasure. The east and west were linked shortly after by railroad, and the Dawson Road lapsed. Today only the two ends survive, 45 miles in Ontario and slightly more in Manitoba.

From Reynolds we drove into the Sandilands Forest Reserve. No name could be more apt, for the black muck vanishes completely, leaving only loose light sand. Sandilands Forest Reserve is proof positive that forest management

is really worth-while. An area which had been burned over repeatedly, it was set up as a Forest Reserve in 1923. The area was safe from the axe until 1939, when 5,400 cords of jackpine was permitted as the annual cut. By 1945, timber cruises proved that the forest now contained more than twice the cubic measurements of its beginning. The annual cut was increased to 12,000 cords of wood. Hydro transmission line poles, lumber railway ties, fuelwood and slabs taken from just one small section reached a value of \$300,000. Cones gathered from this and other Forest Reserves in the Province are collected at the Marchand nursery nearby, where special equipment is used to extract the seeds. Seeds are distributed amongst the four Provincial nurseries, and seedlings go to all parts of the Province.

The Dawson Road continued out of Sandilands, and again we were amongst Ukrainian settlements, but these were rather forlorn by comparison with the prosperous-looking communities to the north. Here the soil is still sandy, with remnants of boulders, not the best soil for farming.

"These communities make you wonder about the Canadian policy toward immigration," I said. "In a way, we have been scandalously complacent and apathetic about making these people into Canadians. They still keep their old ways of doing things, their old traditions, and many of them still don't speak English."

"But you can make out an equally good case that Canada has been kind and generous," Richard pointed out. "They haven't been forced to discard their old-world views, haven't been pushed around or bullied into learning another language, or changing their ways of doing things. They've had freedom of expression in their architecture and in most of their other affairs. You remember—Canada is noted for being a mosaic, not a melting-pot."

We drove on thoughtfully, weighing one side against the other, when we noticed a difference in the farms and buildings. These were extremely tidy, with a certain angular starkness about them. We were now in an area settled by French-speaking Canadians. "RICHER MAN" was the sign

above the general store in the village, and we were amused to learn that the village name is usually Anglicized.

Just outside Ste. Anne, the black earth again makes its appearance. This is the real prairie country once more, the grove of trees lining the Whitemouth River now past. Here were big fields, with horses standing in the rain which now poured down. Herds of dairy cattle, mostly Holsteins, stood patiently in the pastures, their rumps turned to the driving rain. Ste. Anne des Chênes is a French-speaking community on the Seine River, and was named for the oaks which grew in abundance there. Today the trees are ash and Manitoba maple. But Ste. Anne is quite a town—large church and convent, municipal hall and parish hall, all with bilingual labels. Houses are strung out along both sides of the road in a thin line, in the old parish tradition.

There we left the Dawson Road, and dropped south over a prairie trail, since the main road was under repair. In the rain, the black gumbo was very "greasy." It was full of ruts carved out by the passage of previous traffic. But in dry weather, the gumbo hardens up like concrete, and the two ruts which form the prairie trails make excellent travelling.

Even in the rain, the Mennonite-settled village of Steinbach is clean and attractive. Many of the buildings are painted in light tones, white and cream, which give it a bright look even on a dull day.

Steinbach ("Stony Brook") is the only town of any size in the Province which is not served by railway. But the industrious inhabitants have managed to get along without it, and develop a good trucking business. They are Mennonites of German descent. Persecuted in Germany, they moved to Russia. Persecuted there, they have moved to different parts of the world, but still keep their own tongue. Although they cling together, they are extremely progressive. Their schools are amongst the best in the Province, and they actually have a plethora of good teachers—something rare today. A considerable number of Mennonites go on to college, and into professional life, a ratio above average in fact.

The Mennonites came from Russia to Manitoba in the 1870's, and settled in the southern part of the Province. Some took land in the West Reserve, west of Red River. Others went in to the East Reserve, centring about Steinbach. They were excellent farmers, and so are their children.

"They were the first to prove that settlement could prosper on the open prairie," wrote an observer, "away from the woodlands of the river valleys. In more recent times, they are illustrating how the principles of intensive agriculture may be applied in Manitoba. Another characteristic of Mennonite settlements is the village community, quite unlike the isolated farmsteads so typical of much of prairie settlement."

While this type of settlement is more noticeable west of the Red River around Plum Coulee and Winkler, still Steinbach shows the influence. The homes were built close together, with the fields owned and worked co-operatively. They are privately owned now, but farmers and business men know the virtues of both co-operation and incorporation. I counted a couple of chick hatcheries, several creameries, two bakeries, a woodworking and lumber yard, and three or four restaurants on the main street.

Then out again across the prairies, taking the Piney Road west and north through Isle de Chênes. Often a sudden burst of music would sound from one side or other, and looking quickly, we'd see a meadowlark perched on a telephone wire or fence post. Our ears never became dulled to them. I cannot do better than quote from Taverner's *Birds of Canada*:

Though beautiful as a bit of colour, the Western Meadowlark derives most of its well-earned fame from its voice, which rings rich, full and true over the open fields and prairies. . . . It is not a glorified Eastern Meadowlark song, but one entirely different, and at first sound, the Easterner can scarcely connect it with the familiar-looking bird on the nearby fence-post. . . . The clear notes of the meadowlark proclaim the first advent of spring. No bird is so well known or as much beloved by the western plainsman.

The rain ceased finally, and we enjoyed watching these and other birds as we drove slowly along. There were many instances of blackbirds or kingbirds chasing crows far bigger than themselves, though the crows complained raucously about bullies.

Then came the village of Grande Pointe, and before long we were in the municipality of St. Vital, part of Greater Winnipeg. Ste. Anne's (Dawson) Road swung in beside the trolley tracks. Then came the Norwood Bridge, and beyond it, Main Street once more.

5

South by West

St. Norbert — Emerson — Morden — the Mounds
Peace Garden — Wawanesa

OSBORNE STREET leads invitingly over the Assiniboine River and out of Winnipeg, south on the west bank of the Red River seventy miles to the American border. As it leaves the city behind, it becomes Highway 75, the Lord Selkirk Highway. This is the modern successor to the Pembina trail of the buffalo hunters and of the Red River caravans, which hauled produce from St. Paul and St. Cloud. Rolling along that concrete pathway is a far different thing to travelling by the creaking wooden carts, or in stagecoaches that lurched along on gumbo trails.

To the left, in the municipality of Fort Garry, rise the grey stone buildings and red tiled roofs of the University of Manitoba. A short distance beyond is the landscaped triangle where Highway 3 swings off for the southwest.

We resisted its temptation, and continued straight south to St. Norbert, notable for the large Trappist monastery established there in 1892. Just outside the village it stands, girded with walls and gates. "Notre Dame des Prairies," a small statue of the Virgin stands over the black grilled gateway. Below her feet are the words, "*Je suis L'Immaculée Conception*". A smaller white notice appears on the little

gate to one side, making it clear that ladies are not welcome at the monastery.

The Trappist Monks, cowed and silent, pursue the cloistered life, dividing their time between prayer and working in the fields and specializing in honey and cheese. The reforms in this order of Cistercians were instituted in 1664, by the Abbot of La Trappe, France. The regime of the Cistercians of Strict Observance is probably the most penitential that has ever had any permanence in the Roman Catholic church. Canada has four such Trappist monasteries, and one of Common Observance, but no Trappist nunnery.

The nearby convent is that of the Grey Nuns, an order founded in 1738 in Montreal by Mother d'Youville, niece of the explorer La Vérendrye, and sister of his lieutenant, La Jemeraye. Through the work of the order she founded, the pious woman has made a greater contribution to Canadian life than her more famous relatives.

It was at St. Norbert that Charles Mair, dramatist and poet, met another reverse in his career. With his wife, he was held prisoner by Riel for four days. They had travelled down to the International border to welcome the new governor, who was much too anxious to take office. (McDougall arrived six months too early!) Outspoken members of the "Canadian party," they were definitely hostile to the Provisional Government. Mair was later again imprisoned in Fort Garry, but escaped to Portage la Prairie, clad in the costume of a hunting Métis. Mrs. Mair departed in the same way. The story lost nothing in the telling, once they were back in Toronto.

I had thought to see fields of grain rippling away endlessly to the horizon. Instead the fertile Red River valley is a scene of mixed farming, a better foundation for the Province's economy. Acre after acre of low-growing plants with flowers as small and blue as forget-me-nots accompanied us. Flax! Although the crop is raised primarily for flaxseed which goes into making linseed oil, its fibre also has value. A pilot plant at Portage la Prairie and a "breaking" plant

in Winnipeg use the fibre in the manufacture of banknote, document and cigarette papers.

Flax gives way to fields of sugar-beets, destined for the factory in Fort Garry. Truck gardens of potatoes, cabbages and other vegetables supply the Winnipeg market. Here and there ferries link the west bank of the Red with the east side. Many of the villages have French names, given them by descendants of the voyageurs and the buffalo hunters — Ste. Agathe, St. Jean Baptiste, Letellier, St. Malo. . . .

Letellier opposite the mouth of the Roseau River from the east, was one of the gathering points for the buffalo hunters a century ago. It was also on the war road of the Sioux Indians, which led almost straight east to the Lake of the Woods. (The present Warroad, Minnesota, marks its eastern terminus.) A cairn in the village commemorates the old trail. It was the earliest route to the West, and was first used by La Vérendrye's gallant and wise lieutenant, La Jemeraye in 1733. Another cairn stands over La Jemeraye's grave, the first white man to leave his bones on the western prairies.

Just twelve miles south is the town of Emerson, to American tourists the best-known of Manitoba's entry points. New customs and immigration offices and information bureau greet the traveller, and speed him on his way with surprisingly little bother.

We stayed in Emerson one night, strolling around in the long twilight of a July evening. We explored the bank of the Red River, and learned at first hand some of the trials the pioneers and today's farmers have had to face in the dark stoneless gumbo,—“ . . . a kind of mortar,” Alexander Henry the younger describes it, “that adheres to the foot like tar, so that at every step we raise several pounds of it.”

Emerson is on the east bank of the Red. The town developed swiftly from empty fields to a brisk business centre, drawing trade from the country west of the river, as well as to the east. To hold that business, the citizens flung a bridge across the Red and held out lures to a railroad. But along came the flood of 1882, and took their bridge to the bottom

of the river, to the alarm of the railway builders. Undaunted, Emerson tried again, and agreed to construct an iron bridge three feet above flood-water level. They did. The rails were laid. But the boom had subsided, and taxes for the new bridge further diminished the population. The workmen would not close the new bridge until they were paid, and camped on it determinedly out there in the middle of the stream. Equally determined citizens rowed out, swarmed on to the bridge, overcame resistance, and swung it shut.

But one fine morning, a construction train appeared, and the crew set to work taking up the rails, and destroyed the road-bed. Emerson looked on dismayed as creditors dismantled the iron bridge which was still not paid for, and sadly the citizens fished the old wooden bridge up from the waters of the Red River, and put it back in place.

Emerson and its "opposite number" Noyes, Minnesota, are located at the junction of the Pembina River with the Red. The Pembina is celebrated in history as the scene of buffalo hunts for a century and a half. Here and westward on the Pembina Plain, the buffalo hunters assembled for the great hunts of June and October. It meant food for the settlement, pemmican for the Indians, clothing and buffalo robes and shoe leather for all. Often when supplies were very low in the struggling Red River colony to the north, settlers came out during the winter to hunt buffalo in the Pembina Hills farther west, where they sought shelter from the storms of the open prairie. "Pembina" is an Indian word meaning "summerberry" (a kind of viburnum) which they mixed with buffalo meat and fat to make their pemmican.

"For the summer hunt of 1840, no less than 1,210 carts and 1,600 huntsmen, women and children went out from Red River to the plains for the buffalo hunting," one pioneer resident recorded. Forty years before, Alexander Henry wrote of hunting near the Pembina River traverse. He climbed a high tree, and "as far as eye could reach, the plains were covered with buffalo of every description." His stories of buffalo hunts are as exciting as fiction, though no one

today can read without wincing "we took only the tongue of a fine bull." The supply then seemed inexhaustible.

Paul Kane the artist, felt it a moral obligation to take part in one of the hunts on his western journey of 1846. He also wanted to get sketches of a fascinating aspect of western life.

There could not have been less than four or five thousand in our immediate vicinity, all bulls. The scene now became one of intense excitement; the huge bulls thundering over the plain in headlong confusion whilst the fearless hunters rode recklessly in their midst, keeping up incessant fire at but a few yards' distance.

Kane joined in the pursuit, and had the satisfaction of bringing down a large bull at his first firing. Excited by his success, he fired at another enormous animal, which did not fall but stood glaring at him, bellowing and pawing the earth. A second shot finished him, but he remained on his feet long enough for Kane to get a good sketch. That done, he returned to camp.

We, too, returned, back along the road we had come, turning west to drive through fields of sunflowers around the Mennonite settlements of Plum Coulee and Winkler. Sunflower oil has become an important product in this part of the Province. The seeds are processed at Altona, a few miles to the south, in a co-operatively-owned plant. The oil is shipped out in tank cars, mostly to the United States, and goes into edible fat, certain medicines, soaps and paints.

Plum Coulee takes its name from the little creek that runs through the town. Just a little creek ordinarily, only twenty-five feet across perhaps—in the spring of 1950 it had flooded to a width of fifteen miles!

Its waters, joining those of other creeks, reached to Morden, a busy small market town. Morden's original Indian name was Minnewashta, but its original homes belonged to Nelson, eight miles away. When the railway wouldn't come to Nelson, Nelson came to the railway, and took the name of one of its first settlers.

The object of our day's journey was the Dominion Experimental Station set up in 1914. It lies at the end of the dusty busy street, 626 acres that were homesteaded in 1874. Long ages before that, the dark fertile soil lay under the waters of glacial Lake Agassiz, with the slope of the Pembina Hills to the west, its old shoreline. We drove to the office, and were fortunate in finding Superintendent W. R. Leslie not too busy. He could spare us a little time.

"Glad to," he said briskly, his brown eyes alight with humour. "Not every day I get a chance to show Canadians around—~~get~~ three Americans for every Canadian that comes here! Still, we get asked lots of questions from the people round about, of course."

We drove slowly around the Station, Mr. Leslie explaining in swift phrases the remarkable quality of this spruce, of that lilac, of the other plum. . . . He must know every single plant individually.

"At present 230 acres are devoted to horticultural crops, the largest unit in orchard and vineyard. Oh, yes, we can grow grapes here very nicely. Then there's the arboretum—quite a surprising variety of trees there considering our climate. Vegetables, flower borders, hedges, rose garden, rockery and ornamental grounds take up a lot of space, too."

A few more swift turns took us around the farm pond, the ornamental pond in the picnic grounds, and a detour brought us up past the poultry houses and the barns. "Sheep? We kept them until they served their purpose, and the local farmers had 'em. We went out of horses when the farmers around here mechanized. But we've got a beautiful herd of Ayrshire cattle. . . . Well, now I'll get back to the office. Take your time and look around all you like."

We did, for we wanted to see it all over again slowly, now that we had been introduced to the Station. It seemed startling that fruits could be grown here, and even tobacco. Mr. Leslie's words kept coming back, "We don't know what we can do unless we try it!"

The Dominion Department of Agriculture may think it owns the place, but the birds that throng Morden Station

have no doubts as to their ownership. There were birds in every corner—robins on the lawns, Canada geese in the farm pond, wrens whistling from rows of hedges, and mourning doves hooting sadly in the distance.

With Mr. Chris Vickers, archeologist of the Manitoba Historical Society, we visited the site of Fort Pinancewaywining, a mile southwest of Morden. Under Alexander Henry's instructions, a North West Company trading post was built here in 1802. The translation of that long name is just as long—"on the way to the ford over the [Dead Horse] creek."

We had waved a greeting to a couple of sunburned girls in bathing suits, as they pedalled their bicycles against the strong wind. Now we understood where they were going. Just below the site of the fort is a large basin of clear water, man-made Lake Minnewashta, part of the water conservation system of the district. As the youngsters dived off the springboard and swam to shore, we looked inquiringly at one another. In no time, we dug out bathing suits from our grips in the back seat, and were soon cooling off in the pond.

"By the way," said Mr. Vickers when we were once more back on Highway 3, "this is often called the La Vérendrye Trail. It is thought to approximate the route by which the explorer went south and west from Fort la Reine—that's Portage la Prairie now—when he visited the Mandan Indians in North Dakota. We'll see the cairn in a few minutes."

At the junction of our highway with a road coming up from Windygates on the North Dakota border, a massive boulder was set up on a concrete base. It stood there, a little raw-looking in its neat gravelled path, since it had been up only a short time. We read the words:

La Vérendrye's Journey to the Mandans. Having left Fort la Reine 18th October, 1738, the Canadian explorer La Vérendrye with two of his sons crossed this region on his way to the country of the Mandans, whence by following the Missouri, he hoped to reach the Western Sea.

Manitoba is perfectly flat in many places, but travelling through the hills of southwestern Manitoba, you forget that

it's called a "Prairie Province." We drove on to the pretty village of La Rivière, where the Pembina cuts a deep gorge in which lies the village. The landscape was well-treed and rolling. "It is wonderful," wrote Dr. George Grant of Queen's University, "to see the immense breadth of valley that insignificant creeks, in land where they have not to cut their way through rocks, have eroded in the course of ages." Pembina is no mere creek, but the observation holds good for it, too. La Rivière is surrounded by the Pembina Hills, gentle slopes in places, steep cuts elsewhere. It has become quite an important resort for skiers, and regular excursion trains ply out from Winnipeg on winter weekends.

At La Rivière, we climbed the bank of the Pembina and dropped south toward the village of Snowflake. This is the Mound District, the only mound-region in Canada. The mounds occur here and there throughout the southern part of the Province, along the Red River, at Netley Creek, near Gladstone, on Lake Manitoba. . . . Usually they rise in fertile sections, indicating an agricultural people. Yet sometimes they are located where the fishing is known to have been good.

Who built the mounds? And why?

Even today, scientists find them a riddle. There is a tradition amongst the settlers that they were built by the Mandans. But the Indians themselves are more vague about it, suggesting that "the very ancient people" were responsible. Certainly they feared the thought of opening the mounds.

Prairie grasses swished under the car as we drove on an overgrown prairie trail to the foot of Star Mound, which the Indians called "Nebogawawin." The butte, some hundred and fifty feet high, is a symmetrical mound, flattened on top. Paul Kane on his buffalo hunt, commented:

We passed Dry Dance Mountain, where the Indians before going on a war party, have a custom of dancing and fasting for three days and nights. This practice is always observed by young warriors going to battle for the first time, to accustom them to the privations and fatigues which they must expect to undergo, and prove their strength and endur-

ance. Should any sink under the fatigue and fasting of this ceremony, they are invariably sent back to the camp where the women and children remain.

This type of Indian occupation was not the only kind Star Mound knew. A winged burial mound rises on the top, evidently disturbed a long time ago. But the whole top of the mound has been occupied, for Mr. Vickers' research revealed pottery, knives, arrowheads, flakes of chert, broken and burnt bison bones, fragments of clam shell. His report to the Historical Society suggested that "the presence of fire-stones indicated that some of the ancient occupants did more than fast and dance."

While we were bending over the ground, looking for beads or bits of arrowheads, or anything archeological, six curious draught horses had gathered around, studying us. They investigated us thoroughly, allowed themselves to be photographed, then drifted away, losing interest entirely.

Pilot Mound, west and North, is another site where Mr. Vickers has made excavations. It too was opened many years ago. "In it were found portions of three skeletons, pieces of pottery, shells strung on a rawhide brought from the Gulf of Mexico, and copper that was mined on Isle Royale in Lake Superior," says a local history. The mound can be seen from a great distance, and was a landmark to early settlers. It is a gently conical mound, rising abruptly from the flat prairie to a height of 1,550 feet above sea level. Only three lone wind-blasted trees remain on its crest, and from a distance the appearance is startlingly like a Calvary.

The village of Pilot Mound once occupied the sunny slope of this moraine left by the retreating glaciers. When the railway came through, the houses were moved closer to transportation, and the town grew up two miles from where it started. A row of grain elevators stand there like giants on the flat country. From the top of that conical mound, we could see all around us, the whole world lying at our feet it seemed . . . farms, barns, groves of trees, shelter belts . . . Two little lakes lay at the foot of the mound.

Two little gophers held the top. They were certainly surprised at this sudden invasion of their windy solitude, not sure whether or not to be frightened. They were very cute—to us visitors. But farmers think much less highly of them. These dodged up and down in their burrow, sometimes both of them appearing at once, a playful pair in their scurryings and little alarms.

We thought it a delightful scene. David Thompson the geographer, however, thought it had not much future. He warned, "The whole of this country may be pastoral, but except in a few places, cannot become agricultural. Even the fine Turtle Hill, gently rising for several miles, with its Springs and Brooks of fine Water has very little wood fit for the Farmer . . . these Great Plains appear to be given by Providence to the Red Man forever." Which just goes to show how far wrong even a widely-travelled expert can be.

From Pilot Mound we drove west on a sideroad, crossing again the wide valley of the Pembina, and paused on a bridge. The water was the colour of pea soup, which we thought at first to be merely a reflection of the trees crowding its banks. But when we looked closely, we discovered that the river was also as turgid as pea soup, with thick green algae suspended in the water. It was just a passing phase, for ordinarily the water is quite clear.

At this point in its career, the Pembina drains Rock Lake and continues eastward to flow through Swan Lake, and then in a meandering course across the plains to the Red River. Rock Lake lies in the deep wide valley of the Pembina river-and-lake chain, which was once called the Rib-bone Lakes. Centuries ago it formed part of the drainage system of glacial Lake Souris into glacial Lake Agassiz. The sculpturing effect of the waters remains in the wide valleys with their high banks. The little resort lakes of Pelican, Rock and Swan are remnants of a mighty glacial river.

We put up at the resort hotel at Rock Lake. During the evening, we swam in the quiet warm waters, strolled around the beach, but were ready for sleep when music began in the nearby dance hall. It was a Saturday night, and young people

congregated from miles around, and from nearby North Dakota.

Rock Lake is beautiful enough to attract even more visitors than it does, many of whom come to fish for northern pike. In fact, jackfish used to be so numerous that the French named it Lac du Brochet. Numerous summer cottages climb the slope on the north side, as well as a United Church summer camp for boys and girls.

With Chris Vickers, we followed an overgrown wagon trail. Suddenly we came upon a family of partridges. The chicks scattered in all directions, and one tiny bit of fluff flew up into a thicket. The mother flew ahead of us in quite the opposite direction to any of her chicks. She acted crippled, crying out and enticing us to follow her. Eventually she had the satisfaction of thinking she had lured us away from her babies, and then she silently flew back through the trees. It was exactly as Ernest Thompson Seton described it in *Redruff*. "... flopping as though winged and lame, and whining like a distressed puppy . . . then rising in a derisive whirr, she flew off through the woods. Mother Partridge skimmed in a great circle and came by a round-about way back to the little fuzzballs she had left hidden."

The excavation lay just beyond, under an ash tree.

"Here we have evidence of an old Indian culture, prior at least to 1400 A.D., but which is likely much older," said Mr. Vickers. "Now just above here is the Rock Lake Mound which was excavated in 1908, and is reported to have contained potsherds, skeletons and arrowheads. It is part of the famous Avery site, which comprises fourteen mounds on the north shore of Rock Lake. At least two pottery-bearing cultures are known to have occupied the Avery site between 1400 and 1700 A.D. The earliest of these has not, to date, been connected with any historic tribe. The second and more recent is known to represent the work of the prehistoric Assiniboine Indians."

I'm inclined to prefer my history reconstructed in tableau form in a museum. But a bone cracked in a certain way which he found along the roadside, for Chris Vickers could

call up visions of those early Indians, in their breechclouts, feathers and paint.

"You might be interested in meeting Caroline Martin, a remarkable old Indian woman with a photogenic face," he said presently. "I've often wanted to take her picture, but you might be more successful." So we drove north from Pilot Mound and through Swan Lake, a Flemish-Canadian community, and to the Reservation at Indian Springs. We called at Caroline's whitewashed log cabin with its sod roof. And though she chatted cheerfully, she ducked cagily out of camera reach.

Caroline's "soddy" was set in a clearing of poplar trees, the leaves fluttering gently in the evening air, though there was no breeze. "Women's tongues" they are called by the Plains Indians, for they are never still. And here in the background of Caroline's cabin there were incessant, little whisperings from her granddaughters. Most of Caroline's neighbours move out of their houses during the summer, to live in tents pitched in the yard. They cook over open fires. It seems as though they just cannot bear to be cooped up in a house when summer comes. Caroline does even better. She hitches up her bony old nag, and goes panhandling amongst her white acquaintances. Thinking she might be away on such a jaunt, we had taken the precaution of calling on the Agent at Indian Springs.

"She's at home—at least she was here yesterday," said he. "Say, you ought to have been here then. The Indians had a picnic down at the lake. Then again, maybe they wouldn't have let you attend. Sports, ceremonies . . . and I don't know what all. You might be interested in seeing their set-up, though."

Upon his suggestion, we drove down to the shore of Swan Lake. Inside a field enclosed with barbed wire was the booth, a nine-sided framework of poplar poles. These were gathered in to a centre pole, like a maypole, and bound with strips of bark. Fresh boughs garnished it, some pretty ribbons, tag ends of colourful cloth. At the base was a buffalo skull, very old, naturally.

The "walls" of the lodge (open to the sky except for the framework) were palisaded with branches of poplar and oak, and had little compartments built inside, like confessionals. One of them appeared to be something of a shrine, ornamented with another buffalo skull dabbed with blue paint, a few sticks also blue, a group of carnival canes with downy hawk feathers attached to them. A litter of wax paper, cigarette stubs, candy bar wrappers struck the civilized note.

We strolled back across the field through rosy clouds of three-flowered avens gone to seed ("Grandfather's whiskers" they call them here). What the whole thing signified none of us knew, but we wondered if it were some modern survival of the traditions of the Dog Feast.

"These people were Ojibways, who drove out the Dakota Sioux and the Assiniboines a long time ago, historically speaking," said our archeologist friend. "There's Peter Prince mending the fence. Perhaps he'll tell us, though it isn't likely."

Peter posed with dignity for some photographs, as he straightened fence posts and repaired the wires taken down for yesterday's celebrations. His long black braids hung straight down over his shoulders as he paused to accept a cigarette. But yesterday's events? "Was some games and races," he admitted reluctantly, evidently unwilling to discuss the subject. And of course, we didn't press him, so we still don't know.

Leaving Indian Springs we rejoined our road once more, driving into a glorious sunset of crimson and gold and grey. Here were extensive farms—"1,800 acres in that one," said Chris, who knows the country well, and is an expert on soil. With such a guide to interpret the countryside for us we could thoroughly enjoy the scene. This farm raised Shetland ponies. Over there, the reek of a burning straw stack gave rise to a spirited discussion of humus and fertility that lasted until we reached the Vickers home in Baldur.

From Baldur we went on west in the gloaming, through the town of Ninette with its sanitarium and its numerous cabin colonies. South we turned to the resort town of

Killarney at the end of pretty Killarney Lake. Laced across the main street, a row of lights spelled out a welcome, and a comfortable hotel lived up to the promise.

Next morning we drove across the bridge at the east end of Killarney Lake, where several boys were fishing, and followed Highway 3 to Boissevain, a very comfortable prosperous little town. Boissevain looks like some of the settled villages of Old Ontario. Many of its residents came from there about 1910, bringing familiar architectural styles with them. A number of houses have the mansard roof and rounded dormer windows which always appeal to me.

At Boissevain, we turned south to the International Peace Garden in the Turtle Mountain Forest Reserve. Ahead of us we could see Turtle Mountain with its Head, Heart and Tail rising out of the surrounding plain.

Many of Manitoba's visitors from the States enter by the International Peace Garden which straddles the border due south of Brandon. This idealistic project was the dream-child of the late Dr. Henry J. Moore of Toronto. An ardent gardener, a man of vision, he could see it as a beautiful symbol of the bond of friendship between the two great countries. At a meeting in 1929 of the Gardeners' Association of North America, he proposed that "an International Peace Garden should be established on the boundary between Canada and the United States . . . as a token of mutual determination to co-operate in every way to the achieving of lasting world peace."

He made it the mission of his later years. With a committee of Americans, he investigated various sites along the border. Eventually one was chosen unanimously—this area in the Turtle Mountains, astride the Manitoba-North Dakota boundary, and almost the exact geographical centre of the North American continent. The Manitoba government donated 1,200 acres of land; and the State of North Dakota, an area of 888 acres. During the war years, little could be done to develop the Garden, and much was done before and since. Roadways and a lodge were constructed on the American side. A large dam and artificial lake, gravel roads

and some landscaping were the Canadian contribution. In addition, a customs and immigration office was built on the Canadian side. But we still don't understand the stout wire fencing that encloses the Peace Garden.

In the Garden, a cairn set square on the boundary bears this tablet.

To God in His Glory, we two nations dedicate this garden, and pledge ourselves that as long as men shall live, we will not take up arms against one another.

And overhead, the Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes flutter from their flagpoles. Today, however, they hung limp in the humid atmosphere. Rain was about to fall. So we sought the lunchroom, the idea of a glowing hearthfire in our minds. We admired the little lake, and the immense amount of work which had been done in planting out trees and shrubs, cutting roads over the hills and through the birch forest. Wild roses bloomed along the roads. In low areas, willow grew in abundance, and ducks flourished equally well. But where was the lodge? Nothing of that nature appeared anywhere on the road, except a picnic shelter. Rain was slanting down heavily when we circled back to the gate, and appealed to the customs officer for directions.

"The Lodge? Oh, that's on the American side of the Garden."

"But we couldn't find any road leading into that section."

The officer looked sympathetic—but he had been through all this before. He said patiently, "To go into the American section of the Peace Garden, you have to clear with us first, and then with the U.S. Customs and Immigration. Their office is at Dunseath, thirteen miles south. Then, of course, you go back there to check out again, and check out here once more. I hear they're going to build up here at the border some of these years."

Now the rain was teeming down. We eyed one another gloomily, and decided that the Garden did not tempt us farther, that day. We departed northward. It was a little

depressing that a scheme which started out in all faith, hope and charity should be strangled with red tape.

Forked lightning flickered on all sides, as we drove north on Highway 10. A sign on a telephone pole was lighted by the next flash. It read, with singular pertinence, "Is your home safe in a lightning storm?" This amused us immoderately, and our ill-humour vanished.

During that rainstorm when the heavens opened up, the cloud effects were simply unbelievable. Cloud effects on the prairies could cause an artist to break his brushes in despair of catching their multitudinous forms and moods. They are the prairie landscape. Gorgeous sunsets are commonplace. Said one farm woman to me, "Why if an artist painted that, people would say he overpainted, that skies couldn't possibly be like that." In the storm, the skies over Manitoba's prairie country were fantastically beautiful.

At times, the landscape was blotted out with driving lines of rain, which soon fell on us with torrential fury. Then in a few moments, we had moved out of it, and could see the edge of the storm. Strings of vapour, like a fringe of black thread, hung to the edge of the rainclouds. You could see where the rain was falling, cut off in a clean line as with shears. We were riding in sunshine at times, while rain continued to sieve out of a black cloud to the north.

We lunched at Boissevain's Mosey Inn, where we studied the highways map. Due west is Whitewater with its big marshy alkali lake. Beyond is Deloraine with its elevators and beehives. We had been through there before. West of that again is Pierson, on the great flat plains of the Souris River.

The tourist has little reason for going to Pierson in early summer. The time to go is in the fall when the field dog trials are on. For the very flatness of the land makes it noteworthy amongst dog trainers. During the two summer months, the dogs are trained day after day on the open plains where a dog can run for miles and still be seen. And Nature provides the educational material in the form of sharp-tailed grouse, or "prairie chicken." After two months'

schooling, the dogs get to know all the tricks and manners of being good pointers and setters. In the fall, the field trials are held. Competitors and spectators throng the flat country, and excitement runs high to see the dogs compete in skill and style in finding birds for the hunters' guns.

So northward we continued to Highway 2, which leads through Wawanesa. Since this name comes from the Indian word for "whippoorwill," I would like to be able to record that we heard them calling. These birds are said to be numerous in this area. We were content to settle for the coots cavorting in the ditches along the way. There were also big long-billed birds flying low, curlews of some kind.

Just above the town of Wawanesa is one of the half dozen dams on the Souris River. What used to be a barren stream-bed in summer, is now a series of lakes, extending nearly 80 miles from the North Dakota border to the Assiniboine River. Two dams near Melita, one each at Napinka and Hartney, with concrete spillways at Souris and Wawanesa regulate the run-off, maintain the water-table underground, and conserve water in ponds for agriculture. Pleasant bonuses are fishing and swimming in summer, skating in winter, and the bird life the water attracts, to say nothing of beautifying the countryside.

Control of the Souris River is typical of considerable work which has been done in Manitoba. Small dams, as on Birdtail Creek at Birtle, impound the water for future use, and help in flood control. The La Salle River near St. Norbert, has now three dams, which change the sliver of water into a narrow lake forty miles in length. Several dams raise the lake-water level in the resort region southeast of Wawanesa.

The town makes a charming picture, situated high on the bank of the Souris. Here the river makes a wide sweep, and Wawanesa perches on the outer curve. The town is headquarters for a nation-wide insurance company, which specializes in farming properties.

On the highway itself stands another of those historical cairns which add interest to touring. This one commemor-

ates the early fur trading of the neighbourhood. Just north of Wawanesa, fur trade rivals (the Hudson's Bay, the North West and the XY Companies) erected at least seven forts between 1785 and 1828. Here ran the trade route into the Mandan country on the Missouri River. David Thompson, explorer and geographer, passed and re-passed on his travels across the country.

And from Wawanesa, Highway 2 leads straight back across the Province, and into Highway 3. It leads through country which is rich in farmlands, in dairying—and that day, in rain.

6

Highway West

White Horse Plain — Portage la Prairie — Delta
Manito Hills — Brandon

WINNIPEG's wide streets reflected the glare and heat of the summer sun, when we set our course due west. We left behind the roar of streetcars, the squeal of brakes, and the surge of humanity.

Silver Heights, some six miles from the centre of the city, was once the summer residence of Adams Archibald, first Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, and later bought by Lord Strathcona. The estate has since been cut up into smaller holdings, and many are the fox and 'mink ranches in the neighbourhood. The Assiniboine winds through small oak groves in its serpentine course. "More elbows than a school-girl," wisecracked a youth who had attempted to canoe to Portage la Prairie one weekend.

Assiniboine Park, the largest of Winnipeg's city parks, extends on both sides of the river, and it was thronged with holiday-makers in bright colourful summer attire. Formal flower beds burned scarlet here, and blushed pink there on the wide lawns.

Ahead, twenty miles up the Assinibione by water was "The Passage" where the pioneer trail crossed to the south side of the river, at White Horse Plain. But how far was

it by land? Our speedometer clocked fourteen miles from Winnipeg to Headingley.

The officers of Colonel Wolseley's mess discussed the matter one evening in a desultory fashion. But the argument reached an impasse. "Let's send a Métis runner out with a dog carriage, wearing a surveyor's pedometer fastened to his belt," one suggested. "Got to get it right, don't you know!"

The runner started out next afternoon for a little jaunt out to the plain. He wasn't back by evening. Nor by next morning. He finally got in later in the day. One of the officers unstrapped the pedometer, and his eyes bulged. "One hundred and seventeen miles!" he gasped. "I say, this thing is out of order."

The runner was apologetic, fearful of blame. "Pardon, *messieurs*, I forget to take it off. There was a dance. . . ." He spread his hands eloquently. "It lasted all night."

The officers didn't learn the distance to Headingley, but they had indisputable evidence of the Métis' love of dancing.

During the summertime, farm stock ranged freely on the plains. Horses by the hundreds were feeding out on the prairies in settlement times. Sometimes they were out of sight for months at a time, and then the job was to round them up in fall, for they had to be housed during the winter. Many a settler spent long hours in the saddle, scouring the plains in search of wandering bands of horses.

But there was one horse, a white horse, that roamed the plains there for many years, before the colonists arrived.

The horse was a present offered by a young Cree to an Assiniboine Chief in exchange for his daughter. The chief knew the Sioux, his allies, would be displeased with this arrangement . . . but the horse was so beautiful, so fast. He agreed. One Sioux, who had coveted the lovely Indian maid, was particularly vengeful. The Assiniboine chief slipped off that night to warn his daughter and her young husband. They mounted the horse, and fled westward. But with a whoop and a holler, the Sioux caught up with them, pulled them from the horse, and killed them both on the spot. But the white horse, freed of his double burden, dashed off at

a gallop. In spite of their wiles, the Sioux could not catch him. For many years he roved the plain for the Indians, ever superstitious, no longer dared attempt his capture. No one knows exactly what became of him, but the plains around Headingley and St. François Xavier are his memorial.

A noteworthy resident of the White Horse Plain, was Cuthbert Grant, son of one of the leading North West Company traders and an Indian mother. He led the half-breeds in the Seven Oaks affair. But with the union of the rival fur companies, Governor Simpson shrewdly marked him as a man of leadership. Grant was actually hired to defend the colony whose worst enemy he had been. He was appointed Warden of the Plains, magistrate of the law and of the buffalo hunt.

White Horse Plain was an assembly point for the buffalo hunters. Notices were sent out around to all the families to meet there at a certain day. Here the tribe divided into three bands, each taking a separate route.

These bands are each accompanied by about five hundred carts, drawn by either an ox or a horse (wrote Kane). Their cart is a curious-looking vehicle made by themselves with their own axes, and fashioned together with wooden pins and leather strings, nails not being procurable. The tire of the wheel is made of buffalo hide, and put on wet; when it becomes dry it shrinks, and is so tight that it never falls off, and lasts as long as the cart holds together.

Kane with his artist's eye *saw* things. Anyone else would have described the squeal of those all-wooden carts as they drew away over the prairies. You could hear the Red River carts long before you could see them, for "the ungreased axles of the high-wheeled carts screeched like a lost soul in purgatory," according to one teamster.

Highway 1 curves north with the Assiniboine, touching St. François Xavier, one of the early Catholic missions. The big yellow brick church is successor to an earlier log building. Here Mrs. Margaret Arnett McLeod, a most diligent Manitoba historian, found Lord Selkirk's bell, his one public gift to his colony. She had searched through records, interviewed

and written to dozens of persons who might know what had become of the little bell which graced the first St. Boniface Church. There was absolutely no written record, nor even hearsay, as to what had become of the Selkirk bell.

Mrs. McLeod's long search ended in St. François Xavier one winter's day. There she got wind of a little old bell lying in the churchyard. The priest recalled that one had been picked up, left in the basement, might still be there. It was the right bell, cracked to be sure, but bearing the date 1819. The small bell had been transferred to the mission when the trine of three bells had reached St. Boniface. But the hurricane which devastated Red River in 1868, wrenched the steeple and hurled the bell to the ground. Thereafter it lay in the grass until a caretaker eventually stored it away in the basement. After being lost to history for nearly a hundred years, Mrs. McLeod's sleuthing brought it to light. The Selkirk bell is now in the Historical Exhibit at "The Bay".

Poplar Point farther along the road was one of the missions where Archdeacon Cochrane had laboured. In its tiny chapel his body rested overnight, on its way to burial in St. Andrew's churchyard.

In this flat productive area, we always watch for mirages. Early settlers on the plains often rubbed their eyes in wonder at seeing *ahead* of them the place where they spent the previous night. We didn't see quite such interesting mirages as those, but we are rarely disappointed on the Portage Plains. On this hot day, there they were shimmering in the heat of the level countryside.

"If you didn't know that it couldn't possibly be water over there, you'd swear there were lakes surrounding the farmhouses on the horizon," I commented. "You can see islands and water, even waves on the water, and certainly the reflection of trees and buildings on its surface."

"It's a trick of the light, just refraction," Richard agreed. "Wonder if it would photograph?" So he stopped the car, set up his tripod on the side of the road. We were pleased to discover that the film recorded just what we had seen.

Which still doesn't make it real. Mirages are fantastic things, very often seen in flat country, on wide expanses of water or snowfields. Trees and shorelines seem to be lifted into space, suspended in the atmosphere. Sometimes a double image is seen, or a reversed upside-down image. Sometimes low shores appear as towering palisades.

Any object sends out light rays—lakes and buildings and trees not excepted. The light ray is refracted by a layer of atmosphere and bent. Our vision, travelling in a straight line, therefore places the object out of its normal position. What we saw were light rays from Lake Manitoba, fifteen miles to the north, refracted on the Portage Plains.

The village of High Bluff, five miles east of Portage la Prairie, is no mirage. It may look like any small prairie village to the uninitiated. But it once contained a man, a shoemaker, who demolished a great delusion. Upon Cobbler McPherson, the "Republican Monarchy of Manitoba" founded.

Thomas Spence, self-proclaimed President of the Republic, was a man of ideas. They weren't the same ideas day after day perhaps, but at least he was inventive. Snubbed in his attempt at government in the Red River settlement, he drifted to Portage la Prairie in the spring of 1867, after one of the finest brawls Red River had ever known. With a few cronies, he decided upon a form of republican government for this outpost of Assiniboia. It was no trick to get himself elected as its President, his friends as Council. He even had an oath of allegiance—for such as would take it. But like many a government before and since, the Republic was embarrassed for lack of funds to build a Government House and a jail. All right then, they'd have a tariff. And they actually collected some revenue, although the Hudson's Bay Company flatly refused to pay tribute.

"But the mon's drrrinkin' it all up," protested the shoemaker from High Bluff, "him an' all his freen's." No one doubted this for a moment. But McPherson said it once too often for the President's liking.

Two constables, well fortified with Dutch courage, went to hale the cobbler into court for "treason to the laws of the Republic." But in the alcoholic confusion, McPherson escaped, heading east toward Red River. Since he was on foot and the constables pursued him in a jumper (low sleigh), they caught him. McPherson wasn't the man to give up easily. His pants were torn to shreds before they subdued him. The dour and heavy-handed John McLean came to the rescue in the trial which turned into a first-class rough-house. It spelled the doom of the short-lived Republic.

The death-blow, however, came from no less than the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Though couched in more eloquent and abstract terms than McPherson's, it meant exactly the same thing. "... you and your co-agitators are acting illegally" Thomas Spence, ex-President of the Republican Monarchy, went to work in the salt mines. At least, he removed his activities from the political sphere to the world of business, at the brine springs on the shores of Lake Manitoba. Cobbler McPherson went back to his last.

Amusing incident though it was, it was a foreshadowing of the demand for responsible government. But Spence's ideas would not have been tolerated in Portage la Prairie a few years before. Then Archdeacon Cochrane ruled as a benevolent despot. The Archdeacon established a mission there about 1853, amongst the half-breed migrants from Red River, in spite of Governor Simpson's protests that scattered settlements would make government more difficult. But the community grew, though Assiniboia wanted no part of it. When Butler rode through, Portage la Prairie was "the last settlement toward the west. A few miles farther on, we reached Rat Creek the boundary of the new Province of Manitoba."

Settlers came in rapidly, once the railroads reached across the top of Lake Superior and up from the south. One early settler arriving in Fort Garry drove his ox team the seventy-five miles to the Portage. It took three days to make the trip. To his surprise he found his quarter-section just north of

Portage la Prairie, without any trouble at all. He had expected to get lost a few times at least. Becoming lost on those open plains was a common experience.

Another settler in the district was met on the prairie driving a team of oxen with the hay-mower in gear. A swath of mown hay stretched far behind him. "What's the idea?" he was asked. Answered the wily settler, "I'm a long way from home, and when it gets dark, I'll need something to guide me back."

But Portage has grown a great deal from those days. Elevators and church towers prick through the trees on the sidestreets and at railway sidings. Pleasant yellow-brick houses attest to prosperity and comfort for the eight thousand inhabitants. Its wide main street is lined with banks, cafés and shops. Portage la Prairie has become the transportation and market centre for a large and rich agricultural area. It boasts a charming little park on an island in the Assiniboine River. Geese, swans and ducks live there, and the island is said to be the only known breeding place of the blue goose, outside the Arctic. Deer roam the dappled woods of the enclosure. An ornamental garden and attractive picnic grounds complete the delightful city park.

The history of Portage la Prairie goes back to the courageous *Sieur de la Vérendrye*, who with his guides plied his way around the innumerable curves of the Assiniboine to this point. Here in 1738, he erected one of his wooden trading posts, which he called *Fort la Reine*, for the Polish *Marie Leszcynska*, queen of France. It was an excellent site, for here the portage trail crossed from the River Assiniboine to Lake Manitoba, which *La Vérendrye* called "*Lac des Prairies*."

From *Fort la Reine*, in 1742, *la Vérendrye's* sons, *Louis* and *François*, and their companions went in search of the western sea. The company struck out across the prairies, following the route *La Vérendrye* had taken two years before, crossed into the country of the *Mandan Indians*. This brought them into the region around the headwaters of the *Missouri River* and the *Black Hills of Dakota*. For many

years it was believed that the "shining mountains" they saw must be the foothills of the Rockies. But in 1913, a little girl playing on the bank of the Missouri River near Pierre, N.D., unearthed a lead tablet. It was a plate buried by the La Vérendrye brothers, and bore their names. Since they could go no farther, the explorers returned to Fort la Reine, disappointed in their search as their father had been previously.

They continued to explore, and to trade for furs until La Vérendrye's death in 1749. Command of the fort was transferred to Legardeur de Saint-Pierre. He was a brave man, a good soldier, but no trader, and a little close-fisted in his dealings with the Indians. Even in his second year, he had not won their loyalty, and a band of Assiniboines invaded Fort la Reine for plunder. Saint-Pierre, realizing they meant trouble, showed them he was equally firm. He snatched up a blazing brand, and ran to the door of the powder room, threatening to "blow them all to hell first." The Indians took to their heels, and Saint-Pierre slid the bolt of the gate behind them. But next spring, after the traders departed with furs for the east, the Indians returned and burned the fort to the ground.

Various other trading posts rose in the vicinity in the years to follow, since the Indians continued to use the water-routes as in ages past.

In 1741, La Vérendrye had sent his sons Pierre and Louis north over that trail and into the waters beyond, exploring and establishing trading posts. They paddled down the shallow waters of Lac des Prairies, through the narrows which give the lake its present name, Manitoba. The limestone in a beach on the islands there is very resonant and compact. When the waves beat against the beach and throw the surrounding pebbles on one another, the roaring sound is like the throb of a drum.

"The Great Spirit beats his drum," the Indians said fearfully. They called the narrows "Manito bau," the Strait of the God.

More than a hundred years after the La Vérendrye

brothers, the Hudson's Bay post at the narrows was the scene of a great pow-wow. Then in the presence of the assembled Crees, Treaty No. 2 was signed with the Indians.

The La Vérendryes went on down the lake, either portaging into Lake Winnipegosis at what is now Meadow Portage, or entering it farther north by way of Waterhen River and Lake. Historians believe that they then crossed the four mile Mossy Portage into Cedar Lake, "the place of rendezvous." Here they erected Fort Bourbon, designed to intercept the traffic of furs down toward Hudson Bay posts. The Saskatchewan River which drains Cedar Lake into Lake Winnipeg, they called Rivière Bourbon, a name it held for many years. Cedar Lake took its name from the unusual groves of cedar trees still found on its marshy banks toward the west end.

Farther west they went up the Kisiskatchewan (Saskatchewan) River to its junction with the Pasquia, where the town of The Pas now stands. Returning southward, Fort Dauphin was established on the lake of that name. To judge by the names they distributed, the La Vérendrye family was solidly, or shrewdly, monarchist.

We followed the old portage trail, which today is a good gravel road, straight north about fifteen miles over bluffy prairie to Delta, a fishing community and summer resort on Lake Manitoba. The broad borrow ditches were alive with ducks feeding and loafing, and with the antics of coots and the tireless swoops of terns. A red-winged blackbird teetered on a bent reed. A lovelorn sora (rail) practised its sliding scales in the long grass.

Then we came to the famous Delta Marsh, 36,000 acres of waterways, cattails, duckweed and yellow cane. Delta Marsh is "the crossroads of the duck world," and home for six months of the year to innumerable waterfowl and songbirds. It is the largest of several marshland units in the Lake Manitoba basin, and one of the finest waterfowl breeding places on the Canadian prairies.

The marsh lies behind a barrier ridge of sand thrown up by Lake Manitoba, a ridge lined with summer cottages and

fishermen's homes. An odd thing about the lake is that it is fished only in winter. Here and there around the village are weather-beaten "caboozes," tiny houses set on runners which in winter are drawn out over the ice. There the fishermen live during the fishing season, hauling in quantities of pickerel, sauger, tullibee and pike.

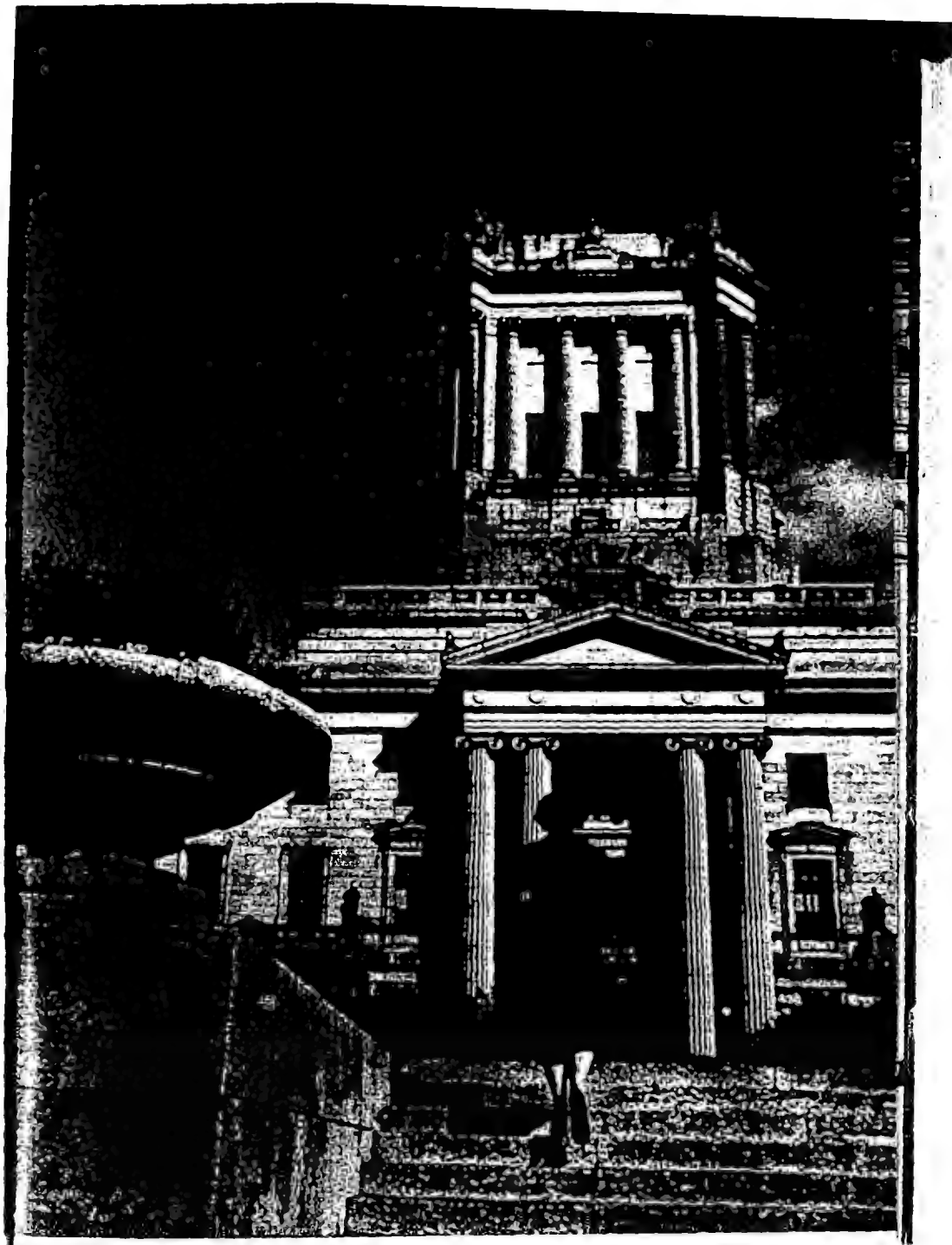
That evening, we strolled around the village, watched the muskrats swimming through the channels, listened to myriads of bird voices—whistling, fluting, booming, thumping, quacking

"Over two hundred species nest here," we were told, "including a remarkable concentration of yellow warblers. We counted seventeen nests within a single acre. Then there are about eleven species of ducks, to say nothing of coots, gulls, terns, grebes and other waterfowl."

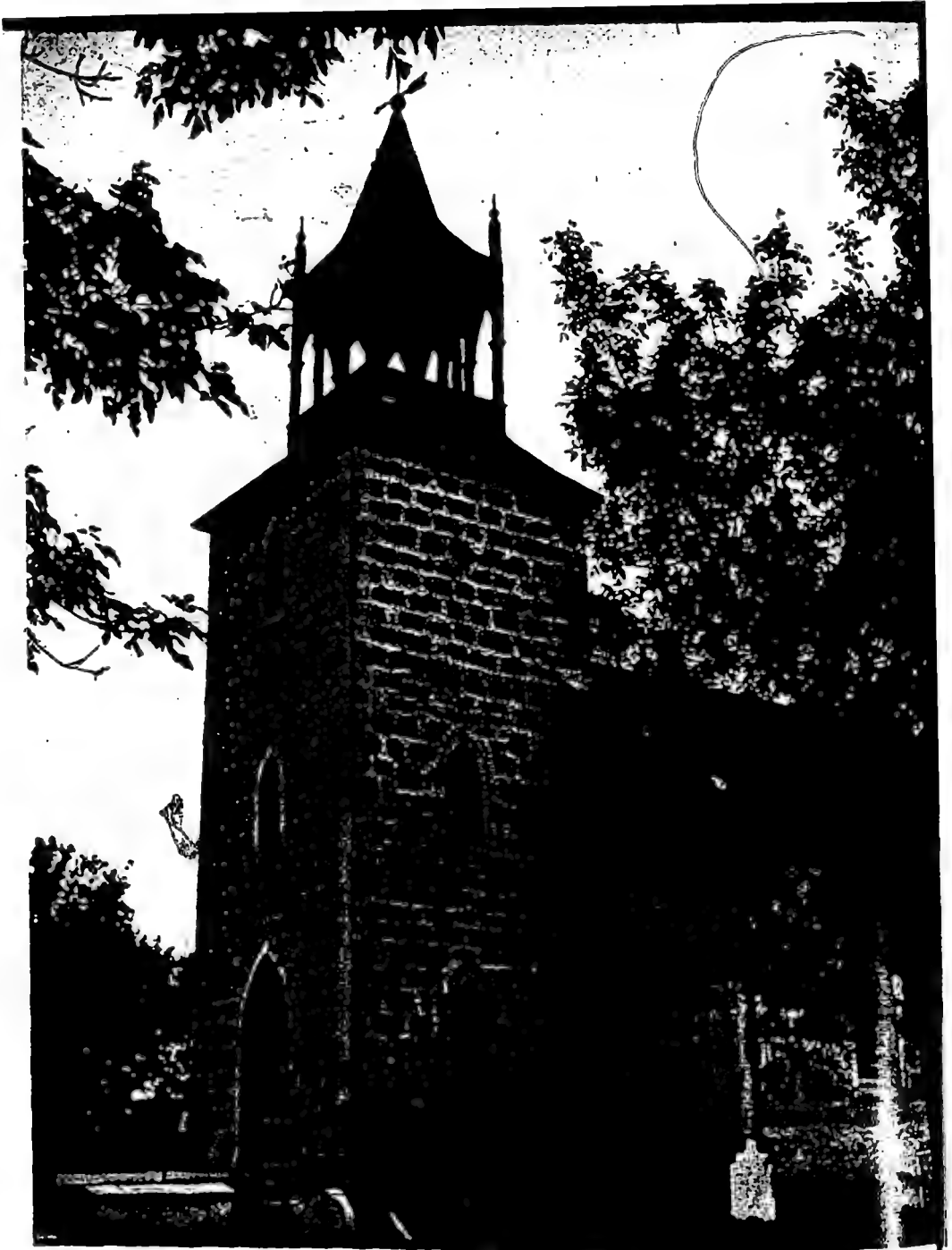
There are birds all over the place. A wren had set up housekeeping in the cranial cavity of a moose skull surmounting a clothesline pole. Yellow-headed blackbirds, like animated dandelions, thronged around. A yellow warbler had built her one-inch nest in a two-foot spruce near a busy doorway. A barn swallow plastered her mud nest at the entrance to the duck hatchery. Delta was once the haunt of the Canada goose, too, until shooting pressure became too great. For years now, the geese have given the marsh the go-by. But they are being re-established. We watched a gaggle of four solemn goslings being taken for a stroll by their parents and an old gander, who seemed to take an avuncular interest.

Delta has an institution unique in the known world. The Duck Research Station there has been made over permanently for wildlife investigation conducted by staff and visiting naturalists. The weather-beaten grey buildings fronting out over the marsh, house a colony of birdlife investigators, whose comings and goings are only as predictable as their subjects.

Like the birds, some winter at Delta. Since 1938, director H. Albert Hochbaum has made it his home. His holidays are the few days he takes off for shooting over the marsh in autumn. Like most waterfowl researchers, he is no senti-



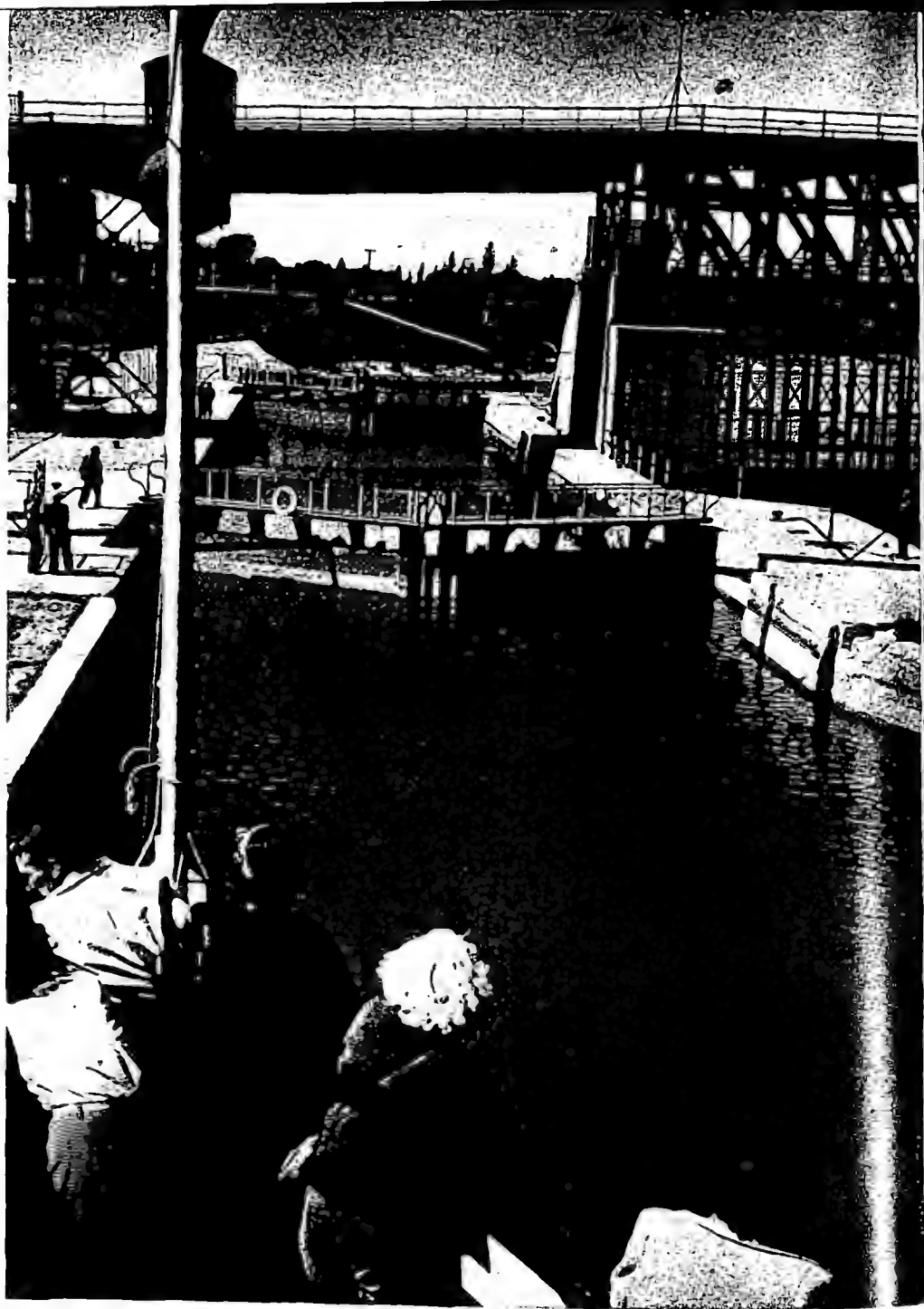
LEGISLATIVE BUILDING, WEST ENTRANCE



ST. ANDREW'S-ON-THE-RED



PORTAGE AVENUE, WINNIPEG
HISTORICAL EXHIBIT, HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY



ST. ANDREW'S LOCKS



BASTION AT LOWER FORT GARRY
DRYING NETS, GIMLI



LIGHTHOUSE AND LODGE, NETLEY MARSH
NORWAY HOUSE



BERENS RIVER
INDIAN SUMMER, WARREN'S LANDING



LYNX, H.B.C. FUR FARM, BIRD'S HILL

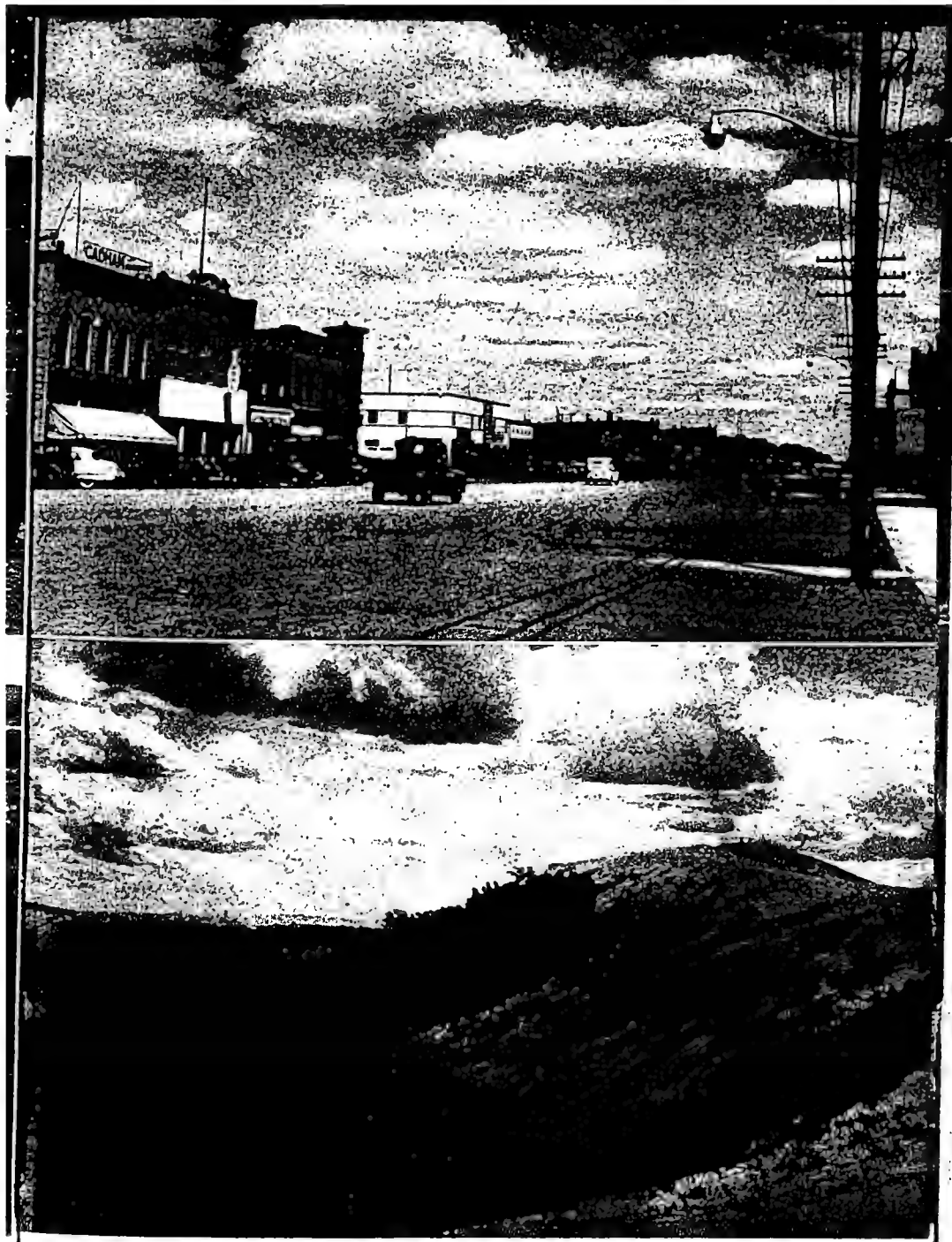


SERPENT MOSAIC, WHITESHELL
UKRAINIAN CHURCH, COOK'S CREEK



ROCK LAKE
LA RIVIÈRE IN THE PEMBINA VALLEY





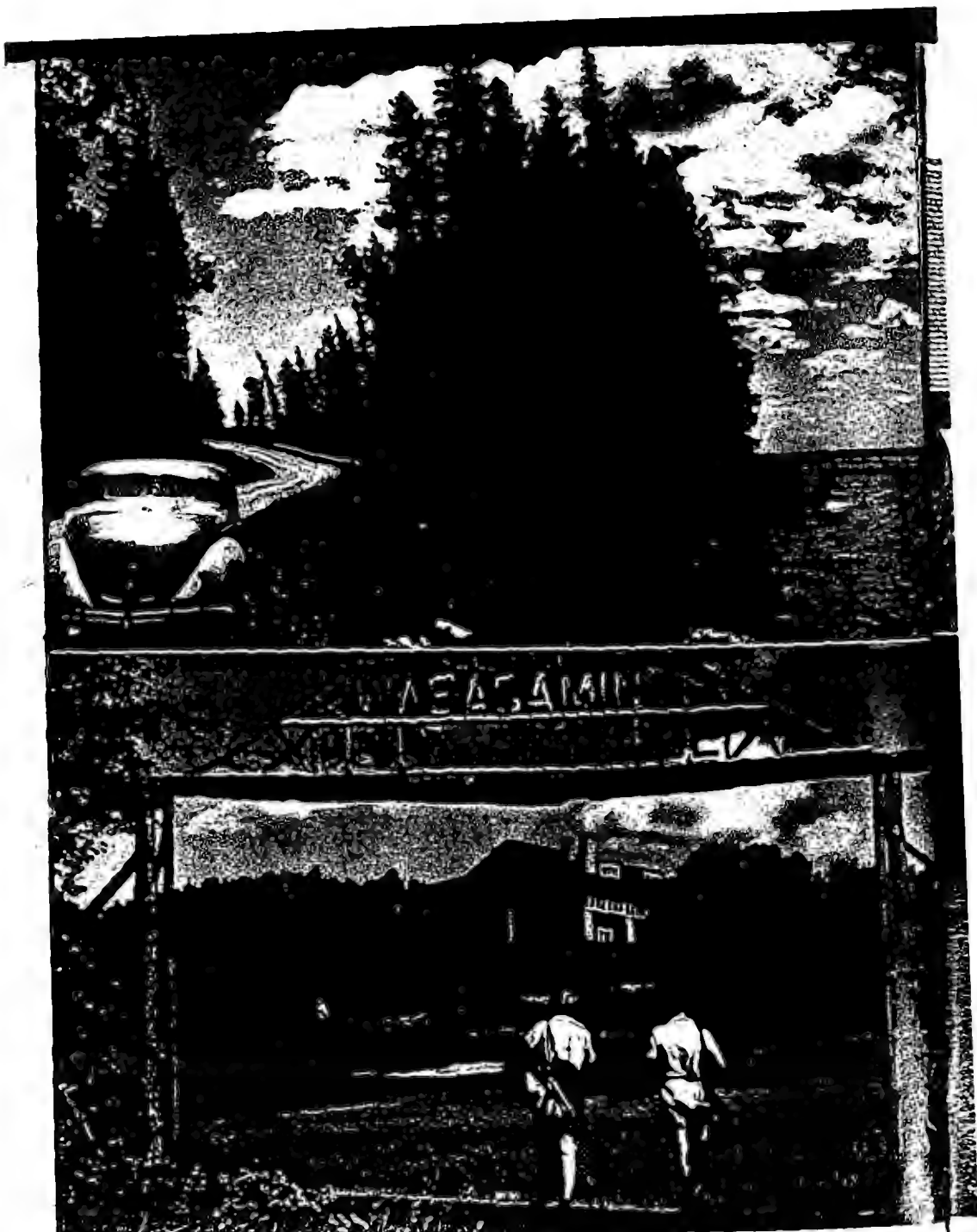
MAIN STREET, PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE
MANITOU HILLS



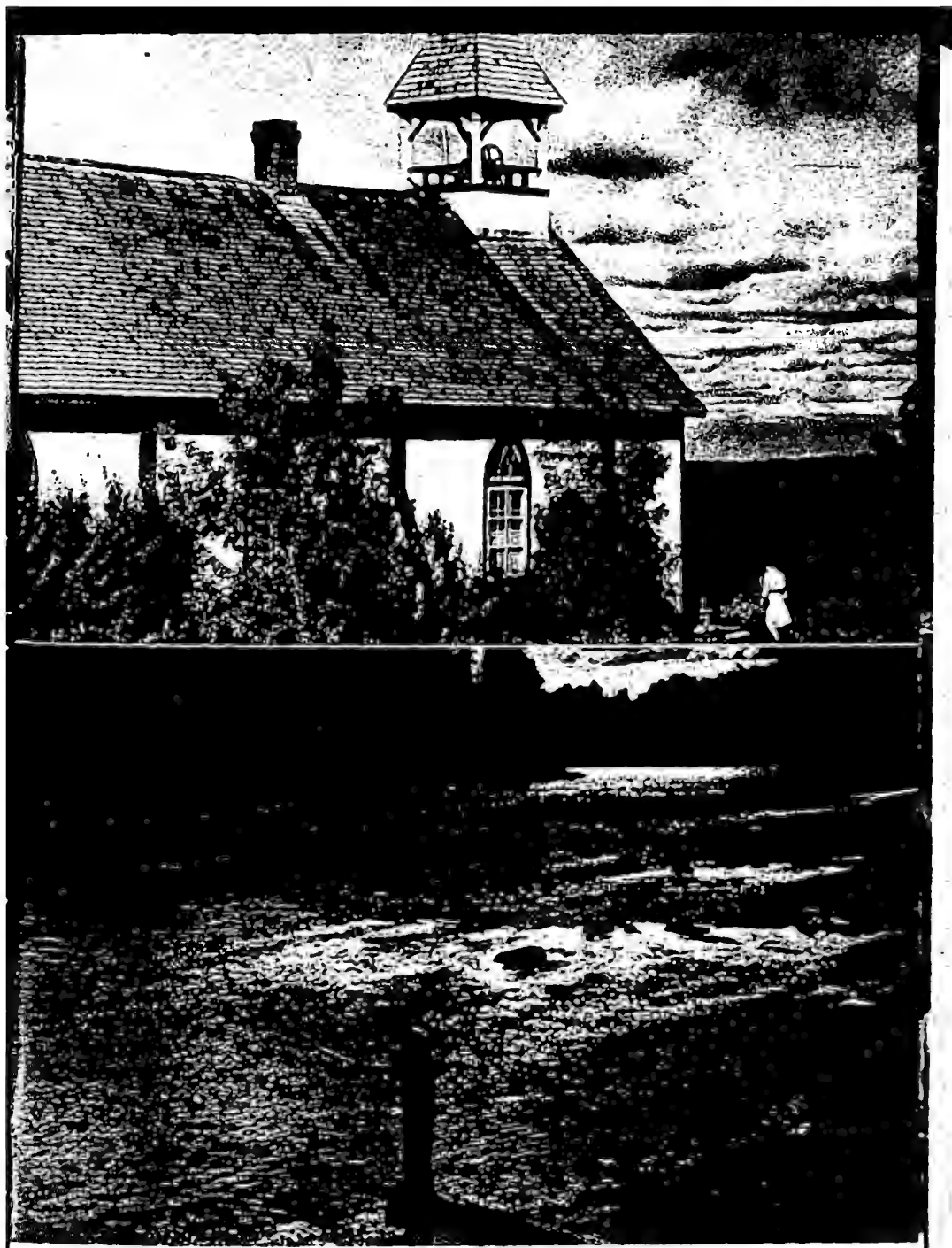
CANVASBACK DUCKLING



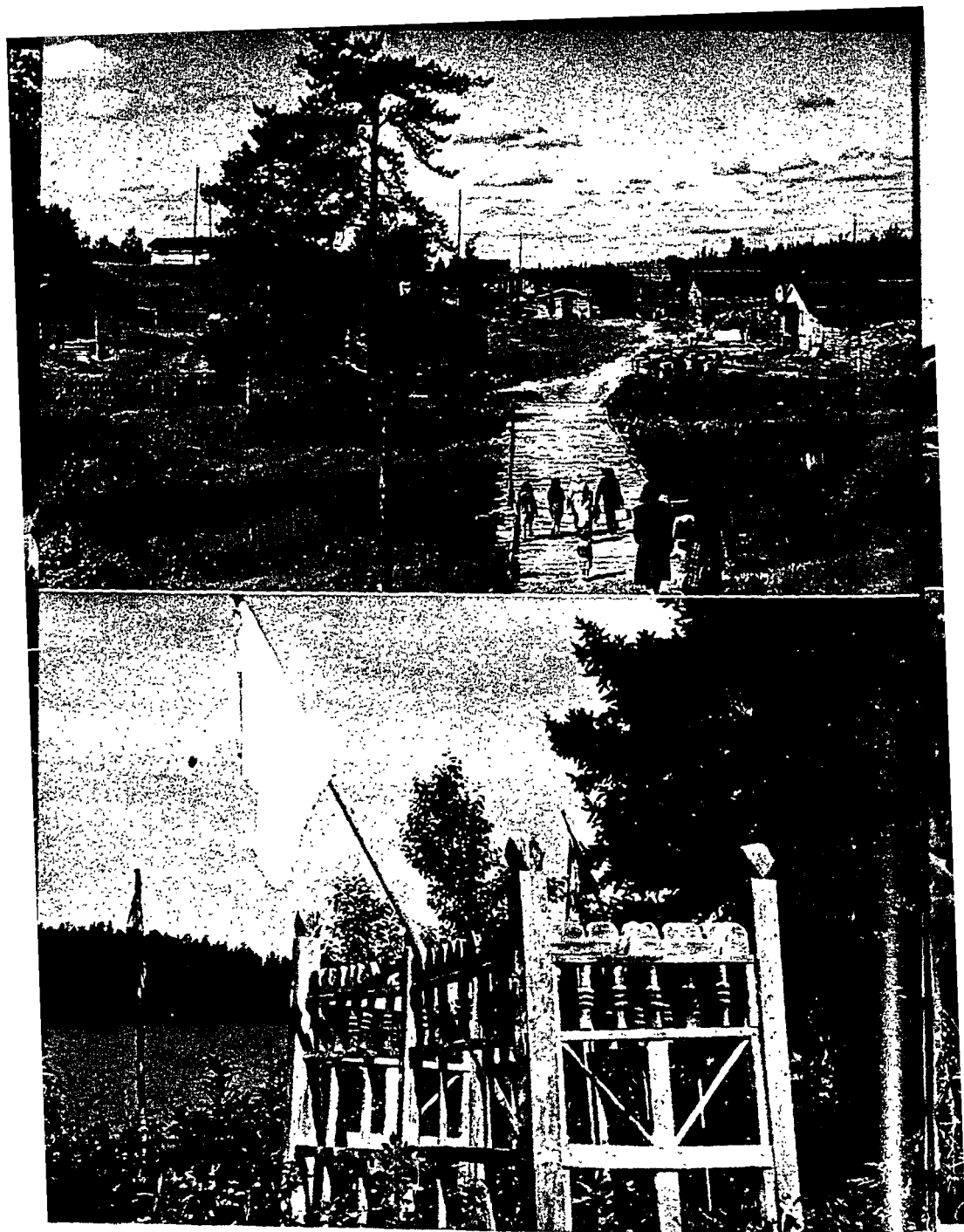
MINNEDOSA VALLEY
FRANK SKINNER, HORTICULTURIST



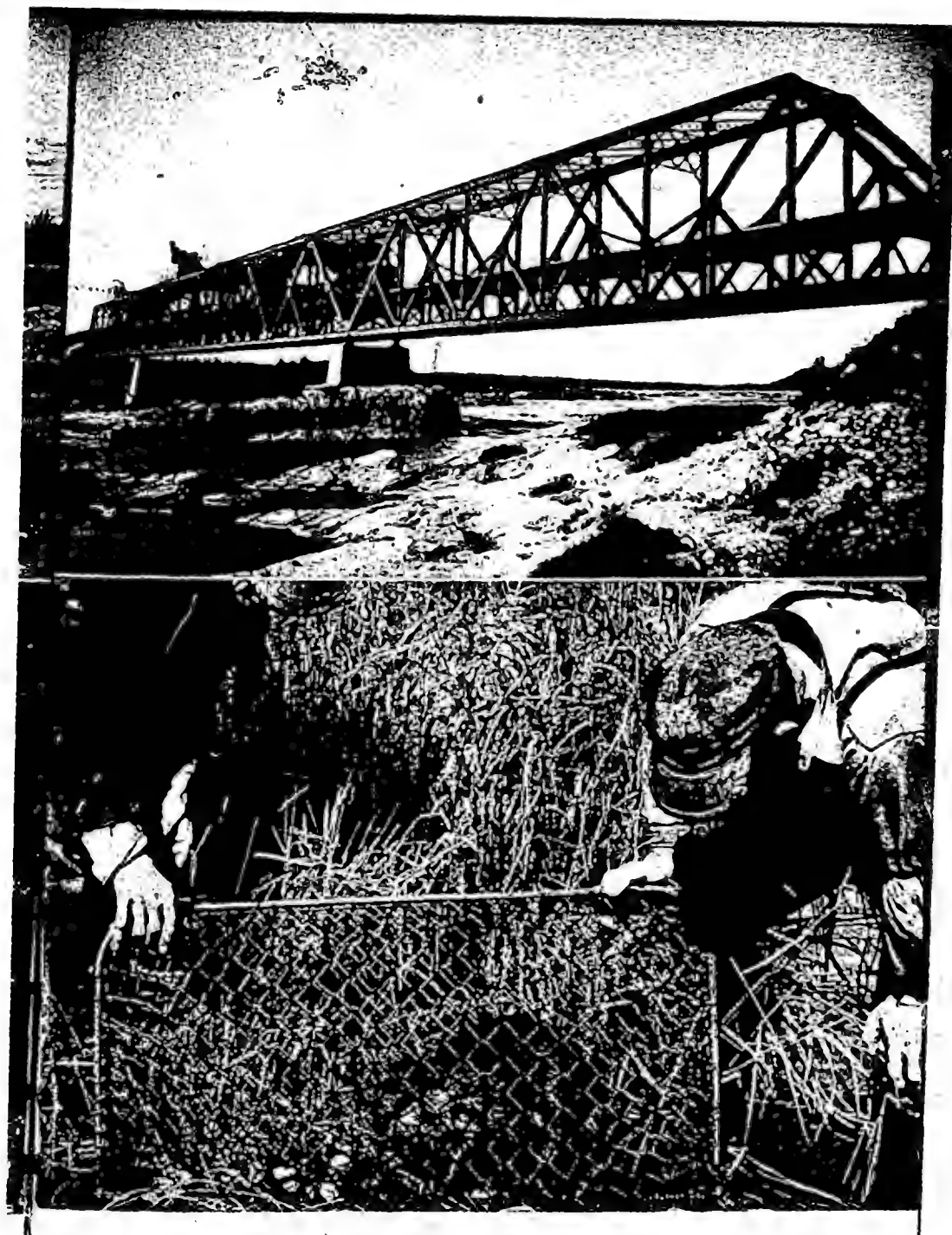
CLEAR LAKE, RIDING MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK
GOLF COURSE, RIDING MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK



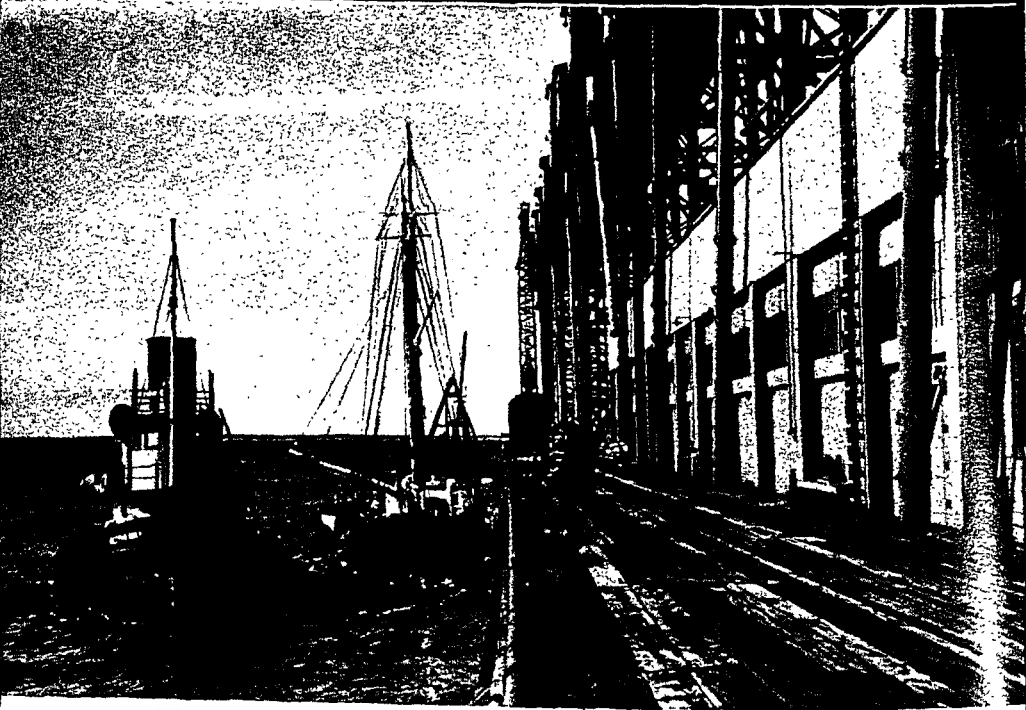
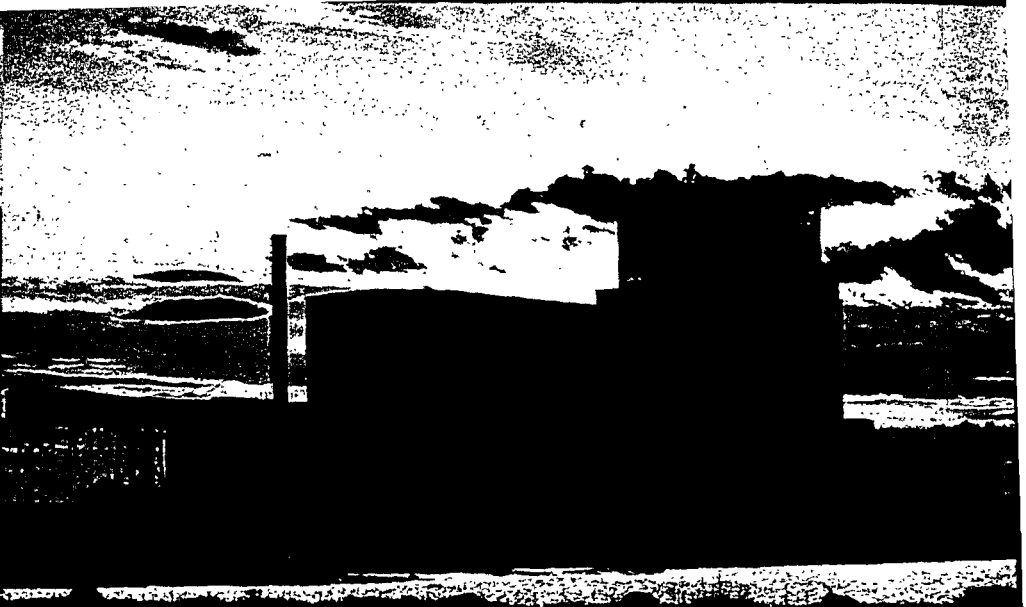
CHRIST CHURCH, THE PAS
FISHING THE RED DEER RIVER



VILLAGE OF PIKWITONEI
WINDIGO FLAGS OVER GRAVES OF CREE DEAD



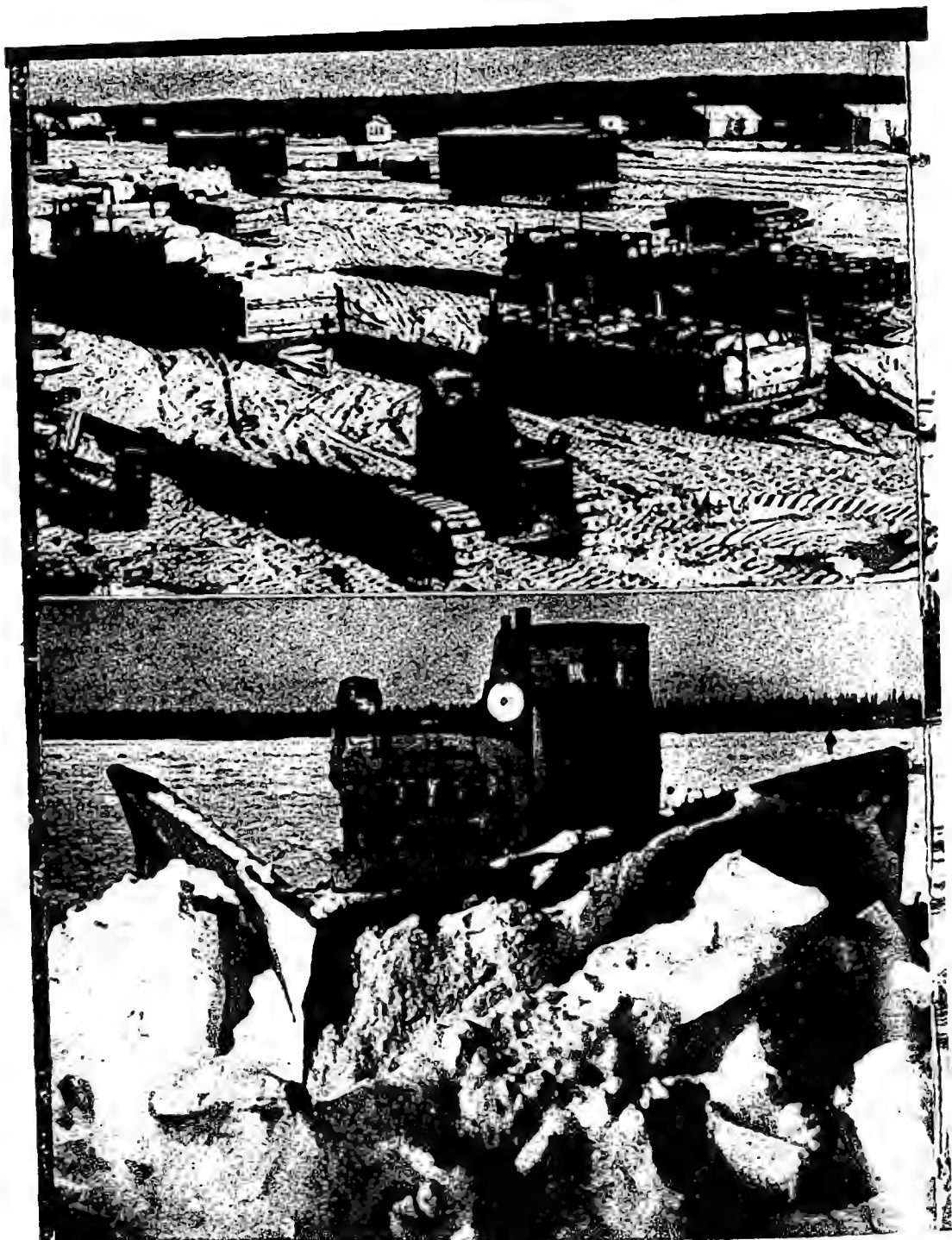
TRAIN AND BRIDGE AT KETTLE RAPIDS
GOVERNMENT HUNTERS RELEASE BEAVER



GRAIN ELEVATORS, CHURCHILL
"COASTERS" DOCK AT CHURCHILL



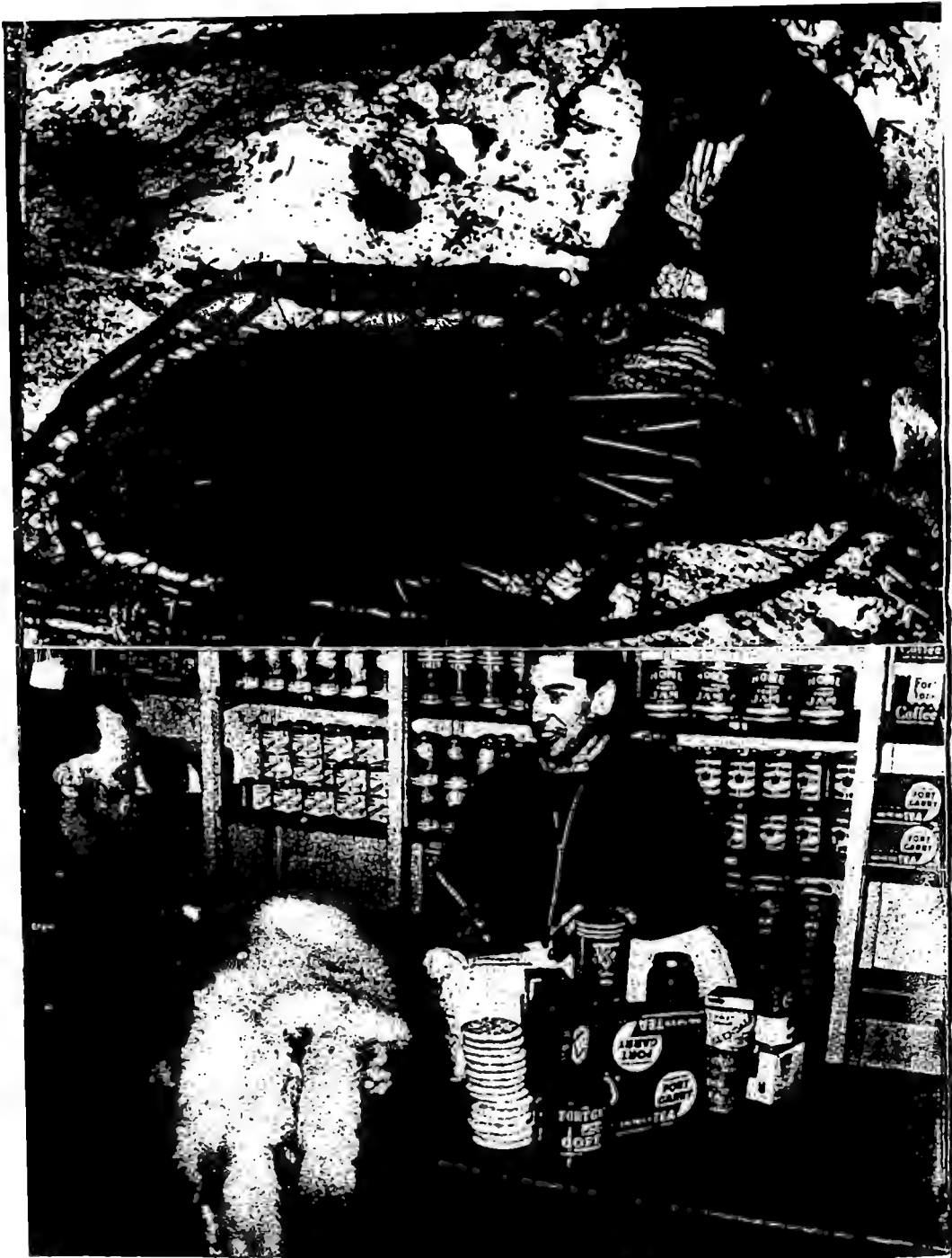
RE-MOUNTED CANNON AT PRINCE OF WALES FORT
HARPOONIST STANDS POISED FOR ACTION



SLEIGHS BEING LOADED AT ILFORD
SNOWPLOUGH LEADS ACROSS THE LAKE



"DOUBLE-HEADER" GETS THROUGH DRIFT'S
TRACTOR UNHITCHES TO HELP TRACTOR BEHIND

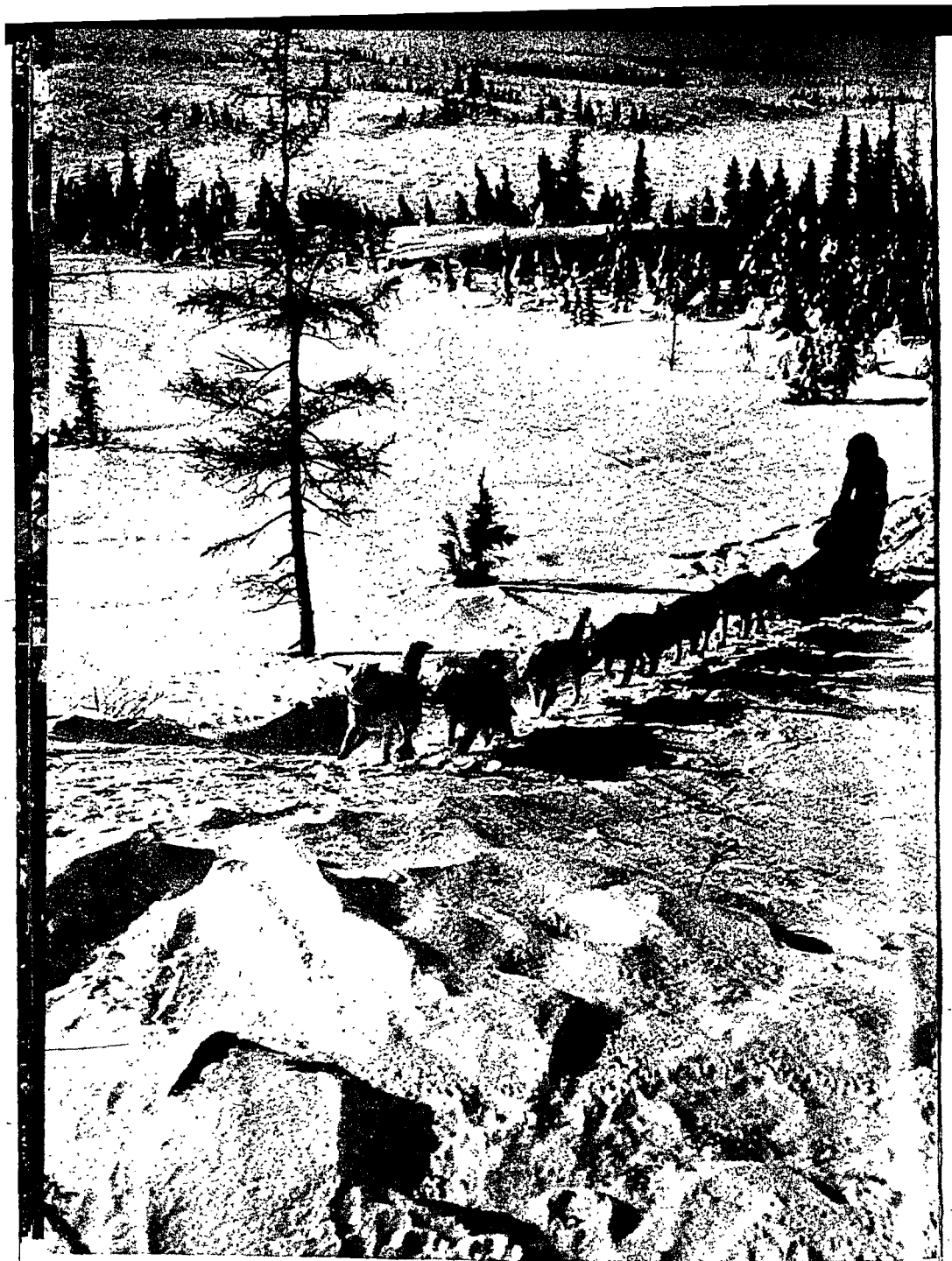


CHYPEWYAN WOMAN STRETCHES BEAVER HIDE ON FRAME

WHITE TRAPPER AT CARIBOU POST



CARIBOU IS CHIPEWYAN MAINSTAY



"EDGE OF THE WOODS" PEOPLE AND DOG TEAM

mentalist. He is an enthusiastic and accurate shot when the wild geese honk over the frozen marsh, and the ducks come stooping in over the stubble fields.

Another enthusiastic duckhunter was responsible for the whole thing. James Ford Bell, business man, historian, sportsman, of Minneapolis, first came to Delta in 1925. By 1930, when sportsmen were wailing about the decline in the shoot, he decided to *do* something. With the aid of Edward Ward, his mink rancher, he set up a hatchery, collected eggs, banded and released the young in the marsh, far more of them than he bagged.

Mr. Bell knew his work was valuable, but felt it wasn't accomplishing nearly enough. He appreciated what it could mean to biologists in yielding scientific information about duck behaviour. In scouting around, he found the American Wildlife Institute eager to take on the chore. A young naturalist in the Parks Service, graduate in ornithology from Cornell and in Wildlife Management from Wisconsin, was their choice. Because he believed in the Delta programme, Albert Hochbaum decided to hole-up amongst the vulturous mosquitoes of the Delta Marsh.

The Delta staff is strictly a male proposition. Peter Ward, son of Edward Ward, is a full-time member of the staff, and in charge of the hatchery. He plays mother-duck to hundreds of hatchings. As we completed a tour of the hatchery, we met Lyle Sowls, the other permanent staff member. He was just back from robbing wild ducks' nests, his hat full of pale greenish-white eggs—pintails. (One, fairly ripe, had broken!) We watched him letter numbers on the eggs using pipe-cleaners and airplane dope.

Mr. Ward took charge of the eggs, placing them gently in a tray in the incubator. Some of the trays held ducklings only a few hours old. "We keep them here for the first day," he explained.

Mr. Sowls specializes in re-nesting studies. If a duck's nest is destroyed, does she nest again? If so how soon? How often? Using two square miles of marsh as a study area, Lyle planned a five year hunt for the answers to these and

many other questions. He learned that hens readily re-nest if their first nests are destroyed, but the clutch is smaller. Out in the fields, we watched his team unconcernedly picking off flat brown woodsticks, making the occasional swipe at a mosquito.

"I've been doing this work for the past two years," he said. "Mallard, pintail, blue-winged teal, shoveller and gadwall are common nesters in the study area. Baldpate and lesser scaup nest there occasionally. We've drop-trapped them, banded them, and individually marked their wing and tail feathers with coloured dope, so that we can identify them at a distance. It lasts for about six weeks, and doesn't interfere with flight."

Arthur Hawkins, North Mississippi Flyway Biologist, represents the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at Delta. Tall, serious, indefatigable, he migrates north with the birds in March and follows them down the Mississippi flyway in autumn. He and his scouts study them from the ground and from the air, count their ducks before and after they're hatched.

"Our air transects cover areas inaccessible by car," said he, "and also form a check against the ground count. We take the first count in May, to get a survey of potential production. The second run is in June to check on hatching and nesting success."

The findings of this group, linked with those of others in Canada, funnel in to the Regulations Committees in Ottawa and Washington. Shooting regulations are based on the reports of these field men. If their survey shows a sagging duck population, the bag limits will be lower in fairness to hunters all down the flyways.

"And here's something that I think is unique in the history of shooting," said Mr. Hawkins. "Delta has probably the latest shooting date of any marsh in Canada, starting around October 10th. We've checked game bags for years, weighing, aging and sexing the birds according to species. We found that a lot of redheads were just learning to fly. When we showed these facts to a local sportsmen's club at

Portage la Prairie, they suggested a later opening date. It was a tremendous vote of confidence in Delta Station."

It would be almost impossible to organize the work on the prairies were it not for the station at Delta, he declared. Here students are trained in intensive field work, the sort of thing they could get nowhere else. Then they are able to take on extensive work with real understanding. Half a dozen students, graduates in wildlife management, get their field work here each year.

Mr. Hochbaum's particular project is bird migration, especially waterfowl, a mystery which has baffled science through the ages. "For instance, for years Franklin's gulls came to the Delta marsh in thousands. Then for several years, they stayed away. Now they're back. Why?" The answer is not yet.

We went with him on a brilliant afternoon to Cadham Bay. The canoe pushed out through the tall yellow canes across the open water to a patch of tules. As we neared, Forster's terns screamed overhead, and several scouts took wing toward us from the gull colony. Then hundreds of gulls sprang out of the bulrushes, circling and screaming, beating into the wind, yet refusing to leave. Al's paddle on the gunwale filled the air with hundreds more, red-beaked, black-and-white gulls against a blue dome of sky. No wonder artists love to paint marshes.

Albert Hochbaum himself is an artist of no mean skill. Peter Ward, too, wields a talented brush. Delta has attracted many well-known bird artists, including Angus Shortt of Winnipeg, Francis Lee Jacques of the American Museum of Natural History, Peter Scott of England, probably the greatest of bird artists.

Colonel Niall Rankin, author and outstanding bird photographer, spent days in a duckblind at Delta Marsh, getting bitten by its ferocious mosquitoes, patiently waiting for his photographic subjects to stray within focus.

Unquestionably Delta's most distinguished visitor arrived long before the scientists and the artists. In 1901, the Duke of York (later King George V) spent a happy holiday at the

hunting lodge there. In later years when chatting with Canadians, he often referred to the duck shoot at Delta.

As we returned to the station, Mr. Hochbaum spoke of the broader aspects of the work. "There's been a lot of research done with upland game birds, but very little on waterfowl. Actually, the thing should be reversed. This station has been going for quite a while now, but there's still a tremendous lot to be learned."

It seemed to us a great deal of work and patience and expense to invest merely to have ducks to shoot at.

"That's only part of it," he protested. "We're working for the over-all conservation angle—the marsh, farm, birdlife, as well as the shooting. The entire ecology of the place is tied in together. Wild ducks are a harvestable resource, one we'd like to preserve." His eyes, usually serene, showed his conviction. "By preserving the ducks, you preserve the marshes, which in turn preserve the ground-water level below the earth's surface. That in turn means water for homes, for crops, for stock and for industry. Just take those gulls, for example. The marsh supports them. They follow the plough in spring, picking up grubs of all kinds. In summer they consume thousands of grasshoppers. They certainly justify their existence—and they wouldn't exist without the marshes."

After dinner, he came over to our cabin. "If you're really interested in prairie birds, you might like to see this book. But don't carry it off with you!" he warned with a grin.

He had anticipated temptation. For Seton's *Trail of an Artist-Naturalist* is fascinating reading. Around 1882, Ernest Thompson Seton and his brothers homesteaded in the neighbourhood of Carberry. His experiences enriched our next day's jaunt.

Our road rose among the sandy Spruce Hills, and the Big Plains lay to the north, as we neared Carberry. There we turned south and were soon on a narrow dirt road that wove its way through parklike country. From time to time it crossed a "Texas gate"—a cattle guard of bars laid across an opening in the fence over which the cattle could not

walk. Here and there a ranch with high corral fences loomed up. But mostly it was solitary.

"South of my brother's farm at Carberry," Seton wrote, "the sandhills began; and two miles farther, the long black line of the spruce forest." Then we were into the Spruce Woods Forest Reserve, where Seton had roved as a young man. Here as *Yan*, he followed the trail of the Sandhill Stag, a story that has melted many a heart, and inculcated a love for forest creatures. The neighbours used to call the sandhill area "Seton's Kingdom."

It is open country for the most part, not the dense tangled forests of the Canadian Shield. It set me thinking of the word "uplands" which has always had connotations of windy sunny days of hiking, of golden autumn, of hunting dogs and partridges. Here Seton crouched under the trees and watched the dance of the prairie chickens on their dancing mound. Here he rescued a motherless brood, and in the kitchen of his settler's cabin, watched them perform the same dance without benefit of their elders' example.

Seton wrote with nostalgia of a lake which he called Chaska Water, a lake about two miles broad that lay in the borderland between the open prairie and the timbered sandhills. It was a most delightful marsh, abounding in birds of fifty different kinds.

At the west and north were the ever-delightful sand hills with clumps of spruce trees and little aspen forests in between. These were the special haunts of grouse of two kinds; also of foxes and wolves, badgers and other fur bearers, as well as deer, moose and elk. . . . Every good and perfect happening seemed centred on this lake.

But Seton made a common mistake—he came back in later life, only to be disillusioned. The hills were there, the spruce trees, some of the birds and animals. But the lake was wholly gone. It had dried up leaving only a wide meadow of waving grass.

Archeologist Chris Vickers was again our guide and companion. From a great distance we could see the shining

golden head of the tallest sandhill, which the natives used to call the Buffalo's Lookout. Since Seton's time, it has been known as Old Baldy.

"These so-called sand hills of south-central Manitoba stretch from a point a few miles east of Brandon to a few miles north of Treherne, an east-west direction, mainly on the north bank of the Assiniboine River, but with fingering extensions on the south bank," Mr. Vickers explained. "It is rather sparsely covered with spruce—in fact, it is really a miniature desert in the heart of the agricultural south."

"It is certainly odd to find so much sand where you expect rich black earth," we agreed.

"Oh, you get that, too. But geologists who have examined this area inform us that these sand hills are in reality the delta of a huge river which followed the wide deep valley of the Assiniboine, and which formed the second drainage system of glacial Lake Souris."

We turned off the dirt road, passed through the picturesque Snart farmyard. As we followed the track made by the farm tractor where it fringed a field of wheat, Mr. Vickers pointed out a dimple in the river bank. "That's where the North West Company's Fort Epinette once stood. You can see where the foundation was, and here is where the chimney was set. I've found bolts and hinges of old-time workmanship here. Notice that the grass is much greener right here than anywhere around, probably due to the debris."

Fort Epinette took its name from a little creek nearby, erroneously called "Pine" from the balsam growing on its banks. The site was occupied by fur traders from 1768-1794. The scene was little changed from those days. It was not hard to envision the Indians bringing in their peltry, the canoes as they rounded the elbow in the river, the business-like traders watering-down the rum as much as they dared. On the air was the aromatic fragrance of sage, trodden by our feet, and the wind whipping through the massive cottonwoods on the bank below us. Occasionally a gopher whistled a warning, but otherwise all was still.

Farther along the same trail, through several gates, was the Snart Site, an archeological site where Mr. Vickers was carrying on excavations. It was very close to the wagon tracks. The site had revealed the debris of an Indian encampment—bones of bison and elk cracked as the Indians did it to get the marrow; a slender iron arrowhead about four inches long. He dug around a bit today with his ever-ready trowel, scraping the earth away gently.

"You have to be careful with archeological work, since you never know what you are going to strike. Hello! Look who's here," he exclaimed suddenly. "Here's a toad eight inches deep in the ground."

There was no hole visible by which the little spotted toad could have got down there recently, so he must have been there for a long time. Now with the sudden light of day on him, he acted groggy, then took himself off with sprawling hops.

Near the fence were the hearth sites, where the archeologist had found other bones and bits of metal, now in the museum in his home at Baldur. Today's short search brought to light a piece of clay pipestem, indicating that the Indians who camped here were "historic" tribes (in contrast to prehistoric), who had dealings with the fur traders and their wares. The special find of the day was an amulet or gorget of smooth bone, about two inches long by half as wide, and pierced with three holes for stringing.

But we wanted to push on into the Manito Hills, those shining crests of sand we had seen afar off, and which are locally called "the Baldheaded Hills." We continued along the tracks, then, sloping off into parkland once more. There we left the car under the shade of a spruce tree, not risking getting bogged down in sand. It was a day for poetry, for shouting with sheer good spirits. The heat would have been unbearable, but for a strong wind which tore through the trees. A brilliantly blue sky arched over us, dotted with dramatic cumulus clouds. At times, the skies seemed indigo blue—the bluest I have ever seen.

We strode along the road for a time, until it veered off.

Up we went to the top of the nearest hill to take a compass bearing on the sandhills. Then through parkland, which was dry as tinder under our feet, we headed due west. Under a tree were two deer standing in the shade. We halted, but presently one threw up her head, sniffed the wind, and they vanished with great leaps over the side of the hill. We saw several more that afternoon, their flanks glowing red in the sunlight.

Passing through that woods, where trees seem to have been set out by a landscape artist, we found the occasional late wild rose, and early "tiger" lily. This is the orange lily of the West, with freckled throat, Saskatchewan's floral emblem. It does not need any gilding, but occasionally we found a yellow butterfly poised there. A rare find was a spiny cactus, which Chris discovered, with eyes much sharper than ours.

"Boo-oo-m" there was a sound of thunder ahead, and we anxiously scanned the sky. Mr. Vickers just smiled. "Artillery at Shilo", he explained. The Canadian Army camp at Shilo is in the northwest corner of the Forest Reserve, and its guns were often heard that afternoon. We came upon twisted bits of metal in the wasteland later on, remnants of high explosives, for the sandy desert had served for target practice.

Then quite suddenly we were out of the trees, and tawny waves of sand rose in front of us, those close at hand dotted with scrub growth of buffalo berry with its small grey leaves, with grasses and sage. The wind was so strong that sand kept stinging our faces and arms. The bald hills are positively startling, entirely bare of any scrap of vegetation, although most of the lower hills have some. There are also several thousand acres of drifting sand. To the south, Turtle Mountain made a smudge on the horizon. Closer at hand were the Tiger Hills, and toward the west, the Brandon Hills.

The wind sculptured fantastic patterns on the sand, then rubbed them out, and created new designs. There was a queer whispering sound of shifting sand, and the wind in

the grasses had a note of despair and sadness, almost a wail. You could readily imagine anyone superstitious finding a tale to tell of evil spirits.

"No snow lies on them all winter, which is the reason the natives call them Manito or preternatural," wrote David Thompson. Alexander Henry referred to the Montagne du Diable in his journal of July, 1806, and termed them a ridge of barren sandy hills. He went on, "Many extraordinary stories are related of the mountain both by Indians and Canadians, of the strange noises heard in its bowles and the nightly apparations seen at one particular place."

One mound was conical in symmetry. Another was like a hump-backed whale. We saw another deer here, and big tracks leading off the dune down into a reservoir at the foot. The tracks led slanting down through the sand and amongst the trees. "Moose," said Chris. And soon afterwards, we saw the big brown cow emerge from the willows down in the moist bottom of the canyon, and make off quickly out of sight. "There's another hole a couple of miles away with steep sides, the sand always sliding down. They say the bottom is quick-sand, and call it the Devil's Punch Bowl."

Happy, sun- and wind-burned, we trudged back through the shifting sand "kept forever in motion by the evil spirits so that nothing could grow there," lost our way a little amongst the trees. My foot discovered a spiny cactus that my eyes didn't detect. Then back in the car, we gulped down soft drinks that were warm and frothy with the heat.

A few minutes later, we were at Steele's Ferry, one of the many ferries crossing the Assiniboine. Not being in any particular hurry, we waded around in the muddy water near the shore to cool off. Then a gaunt old fellow came to the door of his cabin on the opposite side, went back for his hat, and presently he had the ferry swinging toward us. Instead of having to depend upon the current of the river, as is usual, he had a small gas motor to wind up the cables.

"What's the matter with youse folks?" he growled. "Got a horn, ain't you?"

We laughed. "No rush. We didn't want to hurry you."

"That's what I'm here for." But there was a philosophical heart underneath his gruffness. The ferry is free to residents within a certain area, but he may charge outsiders twenty-five cents, or for any car after a certain time of night. "Big night tonight," he went on gloomily, "dance over at the schoolhouse."

"That should mean a profitable evening," we suggested.

"Nope. All locals."

Across the Assiniboine loomed the low Tiger Hills, a name given to the plateau by early settlers. "According to one explanation the name was suggested by the stripes of various tints produced by the frost in autumn on the groves of trees," said Mr. Vickers. "Another version is that they reminded a man who had spent years in India of the jungles there. I think myself that the name may be taken from the tiger lilies the children pick there each year. Upham says the name comes from 'aboriginal names, which doubtless refer to the cougar or American panther.' But there is no record of cougars in Manitoba."

Wherever the name came from, there is no question about the origin of the hills themselves. They are terminal moraines of the ice sheet, their gravel and boulders reaching an elevation of about 1,600 feet above sea level. Henry Youle Hind in his expedition of 1858, called them the "Blue Hills of the Souris." He thought they contained the most picturesque scenery in the district.

Like most Manitoba moraines, these are wooded on the north and east slopes, bare on the south and west where the winds strike them. The hills are interspersed with a multitude of small lakes, the natural home of countless wild ducks, and the woods are full of Virginia white-tailed deer. The lakes are too shallow for fish to survive, our friend told us. Mr. Vickers has travelled afoot through this country both as a lad and as a keen-eyed naturalist and archeologist.

After returning him to Baldur, we drove north through the pleasant rolling Moosehorn or Brandon Hills. Amongst these hills, at the junction of the Souris and the Assiniboine may still be seen a trace of the first Brandon House, a fur-

trading post established in 1793 by the Hudson's Bay Company. It was named in honour of the Duke of Brandon, an ancestor of Lord Selkirk.

The present city of Brandon came very close to being called Grand Valley. There was a rush of settlers into the area around 1882, and tents thronged the riverbank. When engineers came in to find a place for the railway station, they found prices fabulously high. In indignation, they went on two miles to purchase land which is now the heart of Brandon. The city bears the old name of the fur trading post, and is second largest in the Province. It lives up to a reputation of brisk business and industrial activity. We saw it that summer day, busy and beautiful under a bright sky. It is a very pleasant town, full of gracious homes. The site slopes back from one of the Assiniboine's curves.

They call it the "Wheat City" of the west, since Brandon is the centre of a large grain-growing area. It has several important seed-houses. In fact, Brandon is the agricultural capital of the Province, as indicated by its two important fairs each year. "The Fair City" held its first fair in 1889, soon after it was settled. Nowadays the Provincial Exhibition is held there annually at the Fair Grounds each July. Workmen were taking down the bunting as we passed. Then in April, the Livestock Fair is held in the Wheat City Arena. It is a stirring event, and draws competition from all across Canada, as well as from the United States.

On the opposite side of the river is the Dominion Experimental Farm of nearly 1,000 acres, one of the largest in the Farm Service. Beyond it is a large Indian residential school. Our road back to Winnipeg led us across to that bank, past the beautifully-landscaped Mental Hospital, and then east on Highway 1 to Winnipeg.

West by North

Elie — Saskatchewan Trail — Minnedosa — Riding Mountain

OUR NEXT SORTIE was west by north, in fact it led us to the top of the Province at Churchill. We drove out of Winnipeg past the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Barracks, the Deer Lodge Veterans' Hospital and the Fort Osborne Barracks — and met a barricade on the road. "DETOUR. Road under construction" said the sign.

We didn't mind. In fact we were glad of a reason for travelling the less popular winding road on the south side of the Assiniboine. We could rejoin the main highway at Headingley or at any of the numerous ferries farther along. But near Headingley we decided to go on through Elie. We could at least see some of the farms and buildings of the Hutterite colonies in that neighbourhood.

Elie is one of the several areas colonized by these immigrants, who in the last 400 years have moved from Germany to Russia, to the United States, Canada and South America. In a material sense, the Hutterites are extremely progressive — the best farm machinery, tools and equipment, and they are shrewd in business.

In a cultural sense, they have determinedly clung to the old ways, and established themselves as a "peculiar people" in the Biblical sense of the term. Unfortunately, they do not see eye to eye with their neighbours in the matter of

schooling and spending, which has at times become a source of considerable friction.

The Hutterites keep to themselves, and speak a Tyrolean dialect of German. Their name comes from their founder, Jacob Hutter, who died at the stake in Innsbruck in 1536, and they prefer to be called "The Brothers known as the Hutterians." There are more than fifty "*Huttern Bruderhofs*" in Canada, most of them in Alberta, nineteen in Manitoba. When a colony reaches about two hundred members, the group splits evenly, half going to a daughter-colony, both sharing the worldly possessions and the mortgage on the new property.

I often saw the Hutterites in Winnipeg, perhaps a truckload of kerchiefed women, many wearing glasses, and all with weathered cheeks. Their clothing is colourful, in a drab way, always the polka-dotted kerchiefs about their heads, long full skirts gathered at the waist, and invariably, an apron. The men wear dark suits, hooks and eyes replacing buttons. No tie, for such is a worldly fashion.

We noticed one couple on the Winnipeg streets during the Birthday Celebrations of 1949, when for the first time, the city permitted a carnival to occupy The Mall. These two strode along quickly, with few side glances, hands hanging emptily at their sides. They seemed to be in their early thirties, though it is difficult to judge, with their severe clothing. The woman wore a kind of printed purple material which went down to her ankles, and had a wide tuck near the bottom, presumably in case of shrinkage. In front was a narrow green apron. A white kerchief covered her hair, and over it was the polka-dotted square. They stopped to watch the merry-go-round and other midway attractions, with a small smile, containing neither envy nor disapproval. I like to remember that smile as they stood with childlike wonder, but without any apparent desire to take part in the frivolity.

Near Elie, we saw first the big barns of the Bruderhof. Then the two-storied long house, like a tenement. This is the living quarters of the families. A separate building

houses the kitchen and dining-rooms (one for the children, one for adults, males at one table, females at another) with laundry and bathing facilities in the basement below.

Another distinct part of the colony is the schoolhouse. Sometimes this is situated amongst the colony buildings, but here it was on the fringe. These youngsters in their plain clothing have two sets of teachers. The "German Teacher" is absolute boss of the children's lives, and answerable only to the preacher of the colony. He gives them language and religious instruction before and after the regular classes conducted in accordance with the school curriculum by the "English teacher." Like his brethren, the turkey-boss, the cow-boss, the bee-boss, the teacher is a specialist. Like them, he usually wants the best for his project, and the schools have fairly up-to-date equipment. Some of them even use a radio, but unofficially. The German Teacher is usually very co-operative with the government teacher.

Each colony is like a large family, living with few personal belongings, but with considerable wealth in the aggregate. "Having all things common" as it was with the Apostles is their creed. They are perfectly adjusted to their mode of life, have no crime, absolutely no mental sickness — which comes as quite a jolt to those who believe that ours is the only way of life!

At Portage la Prairie, we crossed the Assiniboine, and were faced with a choice. We could travel west over the Saskatchewan South Trail, the route now followed by the Canadian Pacific Railway, and covering a country we had already seen. Or we could go northwest on Highway 4, over the North Trail which met the South at Shoal Lake.

From Fort Garry, the trail ran two hundred miles west to Fort Ellice (opposite the present Lazare), and to trading posts beyond. "The ultimate point to which Red River vehicles travel is Carlton," wrote J. J. Hargrave, "although a well-beaten track exists all the way between Fort Garry and Rocky Mountain House, comprehending a distance of about eleven hundred miles."

The Saskatchewan Trail came into existence after trouble with the turbulent boatmen of the Red River and Saskatchewan brigades. If goods could be carted north from St. Paul, the Hudson's Bay Company reasoned, then they could also be carted west across the prairies. The old canoe routes waned before the ox-team caravans. About three hundred carts, employing a hundred teamsters, made a trip west from Fort Garry every season, before steel rails outmoded the cart brigades.

Through the present village of Macdonald, the Trail swung north to the First Crossing of the Whitemud River, now Westbourne. This section was also called the Mission Trail, because the Anglicans had early established a mission there at the ford.

But long before it became a cart road, this section was in use by the fur traders. Alexander Henry, the younger, tells of the life in the trading posts of the Rivière Terre Blanche, as he called it. His journal opens with a rather grisly experience he had there in the fall of 1799. He set out alone on horseback for Portage la Prairie, then a post of the North West Company. About the middle of the traverse, he was "suddenly seized with a violent colic; the pain was so great that I could not keep my saddle. I therefore dismounted, hobbled my horse and threw myself on the grass." He lay there weakly, finally fell asleep, and was awakened "by the howling of a number of wolves that surrounded me. The pain had entirely left me, but I was so weak as to be scarcely able to mount my horse. I proceeded at a slow walk, as my entrails could not bear the rough motion of a trot. In this manner I escaped from the wolves, which had probably viewed me as their prey."

The name bestowed upon the sparkling winding river was "singularly inappropriate" according to the first district member of the Provincial legislature from Whitemud. A name more in keeping with the facts and with the beauty of the stream would attract greater numbers of settlers, he felt. But no one did anything about it. The Whitemud continues to flow placid and pretty under the old misnomer.

The name is inaccurate on another count, too, because it isn't mud in the first place, but salt. The salt plain is formed by the seepage of underground water from the Manitoba Escarpment, which still brings up mineral salts to the surface in "alkali" stretches.

We drove through Westbourne, settled in the 1870's by the first great wave of immigration from Ontario. The Indians were still restless after the Riel uprising, and uncertain about their future. They were not unfriendly on the whole, and certainly very useful as casual labour. Walter Lynch was one of the first settlers in the Westbourne area, and many tales are told of the Irishman's encounters with the Red Man of the plains.

On one occasion, an angry Indian, gun in the cradle of his arm, sat down smack on the furrow which Lynch had just ploughed around the field. It was a contest of wills, in which one or other was bound to "lose face." But the Irishman's determination was the stronger. Only when the plough-team was almost upon him would the Indian budge from the furrow. He vanished over the prairie, not to return.

Those pioneers could be diplomatic as well as determined. The following year a band of Indians turned up, angry and ready to shoot. The white man had pre-empted their camping grounds, and had better get out. This called for tact rather than firmness. A good meal might turn the trick, Walter Lynch hoped. The bounty that was spread on the grass before the now-uncertain Indians cut deep into the winter's supplies. The Indians had never eaten so well, nor so bounteously. On a full stomach, they grew mellow. Over after-dinner smokes, they grew friendly. They finally departed, shaking hands all round, and returned only once — for an encore.

Some of the natives got the fright of their lives from some strange quadrupeds which Lynch imported. These bulky creatures with baffling eyes and scornful voices literally put the Indians up a tree. Lynch found the sheep grazing peacefully beneath a tree where an Indian shivered with fear. They were the first sheep seen west of the Red River.

The Saskatchewan Trail followed a ridge of dry land between the Westbourne Bog and the Big Grass Swamp — both drained now, and producing fine crops of grain — to Second Crossing, now the village of Woodside. Third Crossing of the Whitemud achieved a new name, too, for

Jemmy Hamel, now divine,
Called the country Palestine.

Who Jemmy Hamel was, no one knows, but the name clung for years, and is still the name of the school district. But when the settlement incorporated as a village, it got ambitious. The town fathers appealed to Prime Minister Gladstone of England for the use of his name. They got a formal stiff letter of permission — but no accompanying donation. Local legend hints that the name had first been given to a horse which “always knew its own mind, but was of different minds at different times”.

We drove down the main street which is still called Saskatchewan Avenue. The town has settled into its strides, after the boom of 1882, when it was expected that the railroad would go through. Gladstone eventually got its railroad, and had another minor boom at that time.

From there our road climbed west over the old delta of the prehistoric River Assiniboine, to the old beaches of glacial Lake Agassiz and the Manitoba Escarpment. We reached Neepawa, where the Stoney and Willow Creeks join to form the Whitemud River. By the time the Manitoba and the North-Western Railway had reached Neepawa in 1883, homesteaders had come in by ox-cart and farmed so skilfully, that for a time, the town was the largest wheat-shipping point in the Province. Today it is the retail and service centre for a diversified agricultural area of grain and grasses, hogs and cattle. Its major industry developed since 1911, when the salt solutions lying 1,500 feet deep in the Devonian strata were discovered. Neepawa now processes more salt than any other place in western Canada.

West again and higher is pretty Minnedoşa, settled by the English, largely, and known to them as Tanner's Crossing

(of the Minnedosa River, then called the Little Saskatchewan). Some of the English lads who came out to work on the farms were so "green" that they had never heard the word *chôres* before. They learned its meaning the hard way. It was just north of Minnedosa at Clan William, that the Irishman Pat Burns homesteaded on a quarter-section and built his little log cabin. Here he began the trading, buying and selling of livestock, which eventually made him Canada's multi-millionaire meat-packer.

The countryside around Minnedosa has been called the "pot-hole" country, from its multitude of tiny ponds. We saw many wild ducks up-ended in their search for food at the bottom of the sloughs. And we saw some strange birds, young ducklings with scarlet down, and green and bright yellow. It looked as though Nature had stumbled, or produced a new mutation. Anyway, when we reached a lunch-counter in Minnedosa, we asked the attendant about them.

He grinned. "Yeah, I seen 'em too. Jeez, I stalled the car I was that excited. Now mind you, I know my ducks, but this time I says to myself 'Charlie, you got to cut out drinking. Them ducks look red!' An' then I seen some green ones. Cripes! But you know what it was?" We shook our heads, wondering. "It was one of them scientist fellows from Delta was dyeing the ducks to find out how they tick."

So that was it. We were later fortunate in meeting Charles Evans of the University of Minnesota who was carrying on these experiments. He had tried them out at Delta Station the previous year. First he selected eggs well-advanced in incubation, a state gauged by candling them against the sun. Using a hypodermic needle, he punctured the eggs, squirted in some aniline dye, and returned the eggs to the nest. Usually the operation was successful. The dye lasted five to seven weeks, until the technicoloured down was replaced by feathers. During that interval, the biologist studied their actions at the one-and two-acre ponds which were ideal for observation.

Just to the north of Minnedosa, Highway 4 branches off to the great level alkali flats to the west, through Shoal Lake

with its odorous water. Beyond is Birtle, with its large Indian residential school, its charming homes, and its ambitious City Hall. We go north through bustling Russell. We had taken that route on a previous journey west. The road had led to Dropmore, to Frank Skinner, a horticulturalist renowned not only in Manitoba and Canada, but internationally well-known.

There on the western slope of Riding Mountain is his nursery, where he carries on his remarkable horticultural experiments. The amazing thing is that neither foundation nor government finances the huge programme of research and experiment which he conducts. It is an outgrowth of a boyhood hobby, and must be private enterprise in its finest form.

Any plant nursery is a place of interest. But experimental farms can be exciting. Consulting a map, we discovered that Dropmore is in the same latitude as Calgary, as Moose Factory, and as Blanc Sablon in Labrador. Its elevation of 1,800 feet above sea level is a fair test of hardiness in plants.

The majority of nurserymen are content with others' experiments. But Frank Skinner has gone far ahead, developing new strains of hardy flowers, fruits and trees suited to the barren northern prairies. He is a prophet not without honour in his own country and among his own people. The University of Manitoba gave him an honorary LL.D. in 1947. England honoured him with the coveted Cory Cup for his Maxwell Lily, and in 1943 made him a Member of the British Empire in the royal birthday honours lists. The United States recognized his contribution to horticulture by presenting him with the Stevenson Memorial Medal, given for outstanding contributions to prairie horticulture on either side of the International Boundary. Minnesota followed with a bronze medal "for the most meritorious contribution to horticulture in the North-west." And in June of 1949, he was elected Vice-President of the North American Lily Society.

His fame has gone far abroad; to China, Norway, Switzerland . . . in fact everywhere that hardy plants grow. The

elderly gardener has set himself no less task than pushing north the tree line. Seeds, pollen and plants from Asia (particularly Manchuria), from Europe and the northern States, together with Canadian varieties, have produced hardy flowers, shrubs and trees to withstand the bitter winter. What that can mean in beautifying and protecting prairie and northern homes can well be imagined. Hardy fruit trees in prairie orchards are not merely a dream, they are a reality. Going a step further, he has conducted experiments with trees which are hardy in climates where the winters are colder and longer than on the windswept prairies of Canada.

But now our road led up the escarpment, then down the two-mile hill into Minnedosa Valley with its splendid vistas, and climbed to the plateau of Riding Mountain. We reached Riding Mountain National Park, paid our fee at the rustic gate, and drove the few yards to the townsite of Wasagaming.

The park covers 1,184 square miles, roughly half the plateau. East, west and north, the escarpment forms its boundaries—to the south, only a line cut through the timber. It is shaped somewhat like a revolver, its jagged outlines carved by fertile farmlands. The plateau rises abruptly 1,100 feet above the surrounding plain, which makes for clear air and cool nights. It is largely the latter which lures vacationists from the parched plains of the Midwestern States. We found visitors from Winnipeg, only 175 miles southeast, from Regina only slightly farther southwest, from Chicago and Wyoming. Indeed, the register at the gate shows guests from every Province in the Dominion and every state in the Union, and even from Mexico.

"Riding Mountain National Park happens to be one of Canada's most popular parks," Otto Heaslip the superintendent told us. "It's second only to Jasper in the number of visitors."

Wasagaming (clear water) is at the eastern end of Clear Lake, and is headquarters for the park administration, as well as shopping centre for the vacationists. Here is the vigorous life of the park, the community life and organized

recreational facilities. Socially minded visitors like the golf, tennis, boating and roller-skating — and someone to make a fourth at bridge. We discovered that many never get beyond the townsite, and so miss the natural scenic beauties, the animals, the little-known trails and secluded lakes.

But Wasagaming is a revelation in summer resorts. No garish advertising, no architectural freaks. A row of landscaped buildings containing all the facilities of Main Street is the merchant mart of Wasagaming. Townspeople and merchants co-operate with parks officials by submitting building plans for approval, and beautifying their grounds.

We debated that evening the lure of the movie in the world's largest log theatre, which changes its bill thrice weekly, against that of the dance hall next door. Its polished floor tempted us, and to the strains of waltz music, we passed up our chance to see the movie that night. The floor was crowded with week-enders from the farming country and small towns around the park. Beauty shop, grocery store, garages, book shop and others had closed down when the dance ended on the stroke of midnight. Coffee bars, however, were still in action.

Sunday morning in the park is as quiet as Sunday morning anywhere else—and folks go to church there too. Divine service is held in the museum, under the auspices of different religions. The oak altar in the lecture hall was carved from local wood, and constructed in the park workshops, which incidentally, produce furniture for other national parks as well. In the lounge is more of the handmade furniture, designed and constructed by the staff, of materials native to the park. Birch, diamond willow, tamarack show their lovely grain to perfection.

After the service, we strolled through the other halls. Two huge buffalo hides hang on the walls of the lounge, with replicas of Blackfoot pictorial chronicles done in black and red. A huge buffalo head, hung near the door, was being studied by two little boys.

"Where's its body?" asked one.

"Must go through into the other room," said the other.

They went to investigate, but returned crestfallen. "Nope, there's only the head."

Native animals and birds are mounted for visitors to study in the museum. Pelicans, pileated woodpeckers, grackles . . . all sit for identification, while their live counterparts may be seen on the wing outside. No one has calculated how many hours of explanation this has saved the rangers! The museum also contains reminders of what the park once was. Throughout Riding Mountain may be found rocks containing fossilized skeletons of prehistoric creatures. To the north of the plateau, rangers sometimes come upon bits of petrified wood.

Long ago, before Indian or white man, great seas flooded the plains and plateaus of Manitoba. Fifty thousand years ago, the Keewatin glacier came down from the Arctic, gouging great scratches in the earth. The ice lay deep over the land. At the end of the ice age, the retreating glacier melted, leaving the mighty Lake Agassiz. Lakes Winnipeg, Winnipegosis, Manitoba and hundreds of others are the picturesque remnants of what was a vast inland sea.

And before the white man came, the mountain ridges of Riding Mountain were Indian highways. The shale outcroppings near the summit provided their clay pipes. The Assiniboines, brave in war paint and all their war panoply, sallied forth from here on their raids. Here the Cree tribes built their tepees, fished and hunted, and held their ceremonial dances. As the buffalo began to retreat, the Assiniboines moved westwards, leaving the mountain plateau to the Crees. More recently, the latter have moved west and north, and the only relics of their presence are the occasional flint arrowhead and the little graveyard on the western shore of Clear Lake.

The museum is as attractive outside as in. At the back is a perfect replica of a small English garden, with flagstone walks, trickling fountain and little thatched summer-house. Old-fashioned flowers bloom beside wild flowers transplanted from the forest. Beyond the hedge are the splendid perennial borders. Goldfinches with their haunting sweet song flutter over the tall blue spikes of delphinium. Beyond the broad

lawns, the white wings of terns and gulls flash over the spring-fed waters of Clear Lake.

We sauntered back to our hotel, past the bathing pavilion, the tennis courts and clubhouse, and the administrative buildings, all of log construction in keeping with the wilderness park. The rustic bandstand has a decorative motif of music notes. I tried them out, and found I was whistling "God Save the King." They play "My Country 'tis of thee" to American tourists.

We liked our hotel extremely well. To our pleasure, we found that reasonable rates and good service are characteristic of Wasagaming. Bungalows and tourist cottages provide other accommodation, though at times their capacity is taxed. That evening we heard weekenders being regretfully turned down. Elastic as the accommodation is, there comes a time when it can be stretched no further.

"Trailer Town" makes it possible for some 3,500 people to enjoy the facilities and pleasures of Riding Mountain National Park on a small budget. We walked down the sandy roads between the rows of trailers, tents or temporary wood-and-canvas homes, where a neighbourly spirit is evident. The tenting space is kept immaculately clean. There are outdoor community kitchens, refrigerator house with individual lockers, and sanitary conveniences. Mr. Heaslip's care and affection for the park is evident everywhere.

At night, everyone gathers at the Jamboree hut for informal concerts and a general singsong. "I've been coming back here for fifteen years," said our neighbour at the singsong, a gentle middle-aged clerk. "It's nice for the wife and the kids. We just couldn't afford a vacation if we had to stay at hotels or rent a cottage."

Several youth camps have been established on Clear Lake. The Canadian Girls in Training were in possession of Camp Wasaga when we called. Chattering, laughing, sunburned, they crowded around their leaders, or scampered down to the beach when swimming period came. When girls' camp ended, the boys would take over, and after that, an older

group. Park land is not sold, but may be leased for either private or commercial use, without too much red tape.

Sport's the thing at Riding Mountain. Swimming and boating are the favourites of course. A breakwater planted out with willow hedge and greensward cuts off the prevailing westerlies that come skittering across the lake. In the lee of the hedge is an ideal spot for acquiring a tan—or collecting a sunburn in the rarified atmosphere. Tall blonde Vikings, deeply tanned, absorb still more sunshine there on the beach and dock. The protected bay is almost always suitable for bathing.

But there is just as much fun for the very little children as for anyone. They play with rubber tires and toy boats in the shallow water, where parents and grandparents and big brothers keep watch over them. And at that size, it's just as exciting to play with pail and spade on the beach as to swan-dive from the high tower—or flirt with the lifeguard.

Canoes, rowboats, motorboats and sailing dinghies lie berthed at the pier. We went on the motor launch one afternoon on a sight-seeing excursion up and down the nine miles of Clear Lake. It was a perfect day, and the sunlight striking the foam made rainbows on either side of the boat. We passed the rearing-ponds and fish hatchery on the south shore, where rainbow trout are raised for re-stocking the lake. Northern pike, perch and whitefish also provide angling for those interested in fishing.

All the sports don't cluster around the waterfront, however. We saw eight games of tennis in action at once, and only rarely are the courts empty. Swings up under the trees make life happy for youngsters, though we observed a youthful romance budding there. The outdoor checkerboard may have been planned for children, but it is always surrounded by elderly kibitzers. There's a baseball field nearby. Behind us we could hear the sound of iron on iron, as fans pitched horseshoes for "ringers".

This time I was determined to ride a horse from one of the several "academies." We rose quite early for our canter, and fortunately the horse recognized an amateur at once,

and didn't bother to extend himself. We followed one of the trails out back of the watertower through the woods.

"We're having a moonlight ride tonight," said the attendant when we returned our horses after a decorous little jaunt. "You ought to come, it's lots of fun. Big bonfire and eats . . ."

About three miles from the townsite, the golf clubhouse commands a lovely view of Clear Lake. What was in the beginning a burned-over area, has become an 18-hole tournament course. Below the links is the Glen Beag road to the Wishing Well. Here within site of the superintendent's residence, a clear spring bubbles up through white sand.

"At the rate of 3,900 gallons an hour," boasted a ranger. Pennies down on the sandy bottom indicated that some wishing had been going on in the dell. It was worth at least that much to have a nice day tomorrow. Next day was beautiful, though I don't suppose the Wishing Well had anything to do with it . . .

With some acquaintances from the beach, we followed Park Highway 2 eastward to the village of Norgate. The winding tree-bordered road makes a lovely drive if only for the sight of tall virgin timber. A sideroad twists south to Lake Kathleen and its picnic grounds. There a fisherman lay basking on a yellow rubber boat, enjoying the hot sunshine, and not worrying about pulling in a record catch. Equally winding is the road north to Whirlpool Lake. As the highway nears the eastern boundary of the park, the curves increase and the road drops a thousand feet in less than a mile. Partway down the slope stands Norgate Look-out tower, where we gazed out over rich farming land, an orderly pattern of green and gold in the July sun. Then from the plain below we looked back, and from this angle, the height of Riding Mountain looks its most impressive.

We had saved to the last the trip to the animal enclosures at Audy Lake.

"If you want to see the animals, you ought to be there at daybreak or soon after," Mr. Heaslip had warned us. "You can see some of them at sunset, but you're not as sure of

seeing them then. Lots of people miss them by getting there after the animals have drifted back into the forest."

We were up at four in the morning for the twenty-five mile drive to the animal enclosures, for daybreak comes early in midsummer. Out past the golf links we drove, the world still mysteriously dim around us. Far on the road ahead two grey shapes halted, their heads flung back in statuesque poses. Elk! But they vanished before we got a good look at them. Near at hand we saw two squirrels, which wasn't the same thing at all.

We reached the gate. Locked. So determined were we to get there on time, we arrived before the ranger was up. But he soon unlocked the gate, and even went along the road with us to make sure we would see the elk.

"There they are!" he exclaimed, pointing.

Where? We could see nothing. But at his direction, we drove across the bumpy field toward the trees. Suddenly the field came alive. White patches became the rumps of scores of elk moving off slowly in the direction of the forest. They take alarm very quickly, and within a few minutes every elk had vanished amongst the poplars.

"They always do that," explained the ranger. "They're very wary. You can't get near them on foot, though they don't mind a person on horseback as much. We have several hundred in this enclosure, but there must be two or three thousand outside the fence." The enclosures are nothing like those of a zoo, but include hundreds of acres, so that the animals fade back into the forest and out of sight at the faintest alarm.

"And those are mule deer, or jumpers," the ranger pointed up the slope. Unstirring a group of five mule deer stood there, their bright large eyes fixed upon us, the black patch on their foreheads giving them an expression of frowning concentration. Then, with several of their famous leaps, they bounded up the slope and out of sight. "We sometimes see moose, too, but not often. Yes, there's bear here, but not tame like the ones at Jasper Park. These keep out of your way."

We were particularly interested in the great shaggy herds of bison or plains buffalo which roam their enclosure. They know no sense of confinement, for the enclosure is two thousand acres in extent. There knee-deep in buffalo grass, "the prairie wool" of the pioneers, the bison multiply. Visitors are warned not to leave the safety of their cars, a cautionary measure worth obeying. I listened to the buffalo snuffling as they foraged in the grass and purple flowering bergamot. Powerful heads and humped shoulders, small wicked eyes and sharp curved horns, slim hips and remarkable speed characterize these former monarchs of the plains. Tawny calves snuggled up to their mothers, as sham battles broke out between the yearling bulls.

It was high noon when we left Audy Lake, and returned almost to Wasagaming. There we turned sharply and followed the Park Highway north. Magnificent stands of timber line the roadside, forests of birch, white and black spruce, ash and elm. Small lakes appear to left and right, some of them with very good fishing, we were told. On one of these small lakes Grey Owl, the friend of the beaver, lived for a short time before going to Prince Albert National Park in Saskatchewan. His cabin is thought to be still standing "if you know where to look for it." Moon Lake and Edward Lake toward the north of the park have picnic grounds and outdoor fireplaces. Beyond, on the edge of the escarpment, is another lookout tower.

It is a climb of some thirty feet to the top of the wooden tower. Below lies a panorama of rich farmlands spread out at the foot of the plateau like a patchwork quilt. Far to the left rises Duck Mountain, looming blue in the hazy distance. Henry Youle Hind, heading a Canadian government exploration party in 1858, climbed the heights of Riding Mountain, and wrote:

The view from the summit was superb, enabling the eye to take in the whole of Dauphin Lake and the intervening country, together with part of Winnipegosis Lake. The outline of Duck Mountain rose clear and blue in the north-west and from our point of view, the Riding and Duck

Mountains appeared to be continuous, and preserved a uniform precipitous bold outline, rising abruptly from the lovely country lying 800 to 1,000 feet below them.

Professor Hind wouldn't have to revise his judgment today. If anything, it is lovelier than it was then, for habitations have sprung up around the foot of the slope. The rich land of the valley produces fields of golden grain, where seas of prairie grasses billowed in his day.

North of '53

Dauphin — Swan River — The Pas

FIELDS AND FARMS edge up to the foot of the Riding Mountain escarpment. Many are Ukrainian homesteads, with their numerous outbuildings and their towered churches. Particularly ornate is the church at Dauphin, with its five domes surmounted by slender crosses, and its separate belfry.

We were pleasantly surprised by Dauphin, which by this time seemed rather far north. Actually, it is only a quarter of the distance to Manitoba's northern boundary. It is a pretty town on Vermilion River, attractive small homes set in large lawns, modern stores, landscaped public buildings, and an especially charming playground for its children. Dauphin is the market town for the rich fertile valley lying to the west between Riding and Duck Mountains.

Dauphin began in 1741 as Fort Dauphin—though the site shifted around considerably over the centuries. It was established by Pierre de la Vérendrye, and named in honour of the heir apparent of France, who died before he got the chance to become Louis XVI. Historians place the post on Mossy River, where the 200-square-mile Lake Dauphin drains into Lake Winnipegosis. For nearly a hundred years that site, now occupied by the lumbering village of Winnipegosis, was favoured by fur traders of one company or other. It was a natural location for a trading post, for the lands around

were rich in beaver and other fur-bearers. The lake shores are low and marshy. The region beyond is cut with a series of rivers and creeks, excellent beaver country.

From Dauphin we turned westward for a few miles, then right-angled north. It is about 260 miles to The Pas, which we planned to cover in an easy day's drive, taking time to look about us. Ahead are more Ukrainian settlements. Fields of yellow clover (which at first I mistook for mustard and wondered at its fragrance) with tow-headed youngsters pulling out the weeds. Houses painted in pale yellow, in white, in very pale blue, stuccoed to a smooth finish. The barns and outbuildings are usually of poles, plastered with a mixture of yellow mud and straw. They have a world-weary appearance, those picturesque sway-backed barns and hump-backed houses. I was reminded of Steve in the Winnipeg Art Gallery.

On our return, we passed these farming communities at dusk, and we could observe little more than odours—the fragrance of the alfalfa, the new-mown hay, the acrid but pleasant smell of burning peat. The cattle huddled into the smudges for relief from insects. The whole scene in that dim light had an old-world air about it, like a painting from Central Europe. It was one of those memories which are “coins for the heart's treasury.”

Here and there along the road are numerous cemeteries, all the headstones facing east toward the road. Some of the stones are engraved in English, some in Russian. Some are rubber-stamped on the wooden crosses. Others are chiselled with unsteady hand, or carved with a jack-knife. Most have crosses, some with the extra slanting bar, some with elaborate little minarets. On children's graves almost always a lamb stands in full relief on the headstone. Many have artificial wreaths in glass-fronted boxes laid at the foot of the graves.

Duck Mountain to the left is a provincial forest reserve. Its Baldy Mountain reaches the greatest altitude in Manitoba, 2,727 feet above sea level. From the plateau, swift rippling streams cross the road—Valley, Drifting, Mink, Fishing. . . . Near the railroad village of Garland, a road leads into the

reserve past Singoosh Lake, well-known for its fine fishing. Pine, Sclater, and Duck Rivers hasten eastward before Highway 10 turns again west above Cowan.

Here for the first time I noticed fields of unfamiliar salmon-pink flowers, literally drifts of them. It was Indian paintbrush, its flowers sometimes pale pink, sometimes rosy, sometimes salmon. There were also daisies, red lilies, purple vetch and deep blue harebells. It was like the description of the prairies given by early travellers before the land came under cultivation.

This was a day of beautiful cloud displays, towering cumulus clouds, then heavy black rain clouds with their ragged edges. Overhead the sky was very blue at first, but the clouds swept over, and emptied themselves upon us. With it came the wind. The trees along the road bowed and swayed before it, and with the downpour, we halted to watch it and wait for a lull. Lightning forked out of the clouds, and played around a solitary mound jutting up into the western skyline. Nothing could be more natural, we learned, for that was 2,000-foot Thunderbird Mountain athwart the Saskatchewan-Manitoba border. The Indians believed that the great spirit there manufactured thunder and lightning. Because the latter seemed to flash all around the hill, the superstitious Indians, not unwisely refused to go near it in a storm. Later on explorers broke up the name, so that it was often called Bird Mountain, but nowadays Thunder Mountain.

The country around Swan River was once known to the Indians as Trappers' Paradise. David Thompson, exploring the Swan River to its source, commented on the immense quantity of beaver to be found there — and wondered how long they would survive. In the early 1800's, Swan River was the scene of intense fur trade rivalry. The North Westers and the Hudson's Bay Company kept building trading posts one above the other, hoping to be the first to intercept the Indians coming down with their furs. An amusing incident in the conflict between the traders occurred when the Nor' Westers turned their cattle into the Hudson's Bay Company

barley patch. History does not record how the latter retaliated.

The village of Swan River was for the year of 1875 the legislative headquarters of the North West Territories, and therefore of the North West Mounted Police. At that time, the settlement was called Livingston, and was far outside the boundaries of the "postage stamp Province." But the following year, the honour was transferred to Fort Pelly in Saskatchewan.

By 1898, homesteaders began to drive their oxen through the valleys and over the steppes to reach the remarkably rich soil of the Swan River area. There were settlers of many creeds and nationalities, among them the Doukhobors. But the "Spirit Wrestlers" moved before long to the more temperate climate of British Columbia. Today Swan River is the growing centre of a fertile farming area, serving the rich though narrow valley that lies between Duck and Porcupine Mountains.

At Swan River, we turned north again, our road dodging back and forth over the railroad, and again crossing many streams, these flowing from Porcupine Mountain. At Birch River, bulldozers were clearing land for new settlers, most of them veterans of World War II. Farther north, we crossed the Steeprock River, in whose marshes the Hudson's Bay Company developed a muskrat project in the 1930's. The most beautiful of these rivers is the Red Deer, rippling over stones, clear and clean, and famous amongst pickerel fishermen.

Just as we crossed the 53rd parallel, the sun burst through the clouds, a tumultuous sky. Over the marshy flat land and water of Dawson Bay, where the road skirts Lake Winnipegosis, arched a glorious rainbow. In fact, not one rainbow, but two. *"I do set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a covenant between me and the earth."* The words came to my mind from the mists of Sunday school days. But here was a double guarantee that the waters would not prevail.

A bit farther along we came upon the white canvas tents of several Indian families pitched in the woods alongside the

road. Several women were picking saskatoon berries, for the rain had by-passed that area in the whimsical way of western showers. The men, very bronzed in countenance, sat around their tents over their campfires, talking and laughing.

"They take things easy," I remarked.

"They know how to take life as it comes," was my husband's attitude, "without wanting more and more, getting restless and dissatisfied with possessions. They don't work if they don't feel like it. We glorify work, so that we don't know what to do with ourselves without it to guide our lives."

Once more, and finally, we crossed the railroad tracks which led in to The Pas, then picked our way over the Great Bog. The words are aptly descriptive. It is muskeg crusted over with reindeer moss, Labrador tea, stunted spruce and tamarack, and where blueberries grow in profusion. The road requires continual filling, and even so, breaks out into "boils" which bog down car and driver. We were fortunate in getting through with little difficulty. Beyond and to the west are the Pasquia Hills, a low ridge running far into Saskatchewan.

The Pas at first seemed small—but how it had grown in a week when we returned from Churchill! Now it seemed north. By then, it seemed 'way down south in the banana belt, as the northerners said. By then, having seen the great marshes which will no doubt be drained for wheatland someday, the forests which sustain the woodworking industries at The Pas, the great hydro-electric power which the rivers of the north will one day supply, we could understand how some residents visualize their town as the future "Edmonton of Manitoba."

Because we were taking the Churchill train at The Pas, we arrived there a day early to look around. We chatted with some of the guests at the hotel, sauntered up and down the streets with time and to spare—so we thought.

The Pas—no one knows for sure where the name comes from—has grown from a remote fur-trading post established in 1749 by the La Vérendrye brothers, to a town of 4,000 population. Pierre de la Vérendrye called it Fort Paskoyac,

and the river, Pasquia—both pronounced exactly the same. Today it is pronounced "paw," sometimes called Le Pas, from its French connections. I even heard one trapper speaking of "the Le Pas" taking no chances.

La Vérendrye was replaced by Niverville before he did any business in Fort Paskoyac. The post did not remain long in French hands, for the Seven Years' War was on. But the location was haunted by fur-traders until the end of the century. Twelve miles down the Saskatchewan River at a sharp point which Professor A. S. Morton identifies as Kelsey's "Deering's Point," the North West Company cached stores of pemmican to supply their canoe brigades. The cache was known only to the guides. This system worked well enough, until one year, the cache was so well hidden that no one could find it. Even today, occasional 90-pound leather-covered sacks are turned up on the banks of the Saskatchewan River.

The Pas has long been the distributing centre for northern Manitoba, the true "gateway to the north." Until 1930, all transportation was by winter road or summer canoe trail to the trading posts of the north, and The Pas was known as the place "where rail meets trail." In that year, the Hudson Bay Railway was officially opened. It is operated by the Canadian National Railways, and is the fulfilment of a dream of long standing.

Immigrants from Europe and from the eastern Provinces peopled the vast prairies, and the fertile valleys of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. They raised bumper crops of grain, and an era of railroad building began throughout the West. As early as 1885, agitation commenced for a railway to Hudson Bay. From a seaport there, ships could carry grain to Europe by a route eleven hundred miles shorter than by the Great Lakes.

Survey parties went overland, searching out the best terrain. Sea captains tested out northern shipping lanes. In the west, controversy raged over the best seaport—Nelson or Churchill? Eastern Canada, understandably, was not enthusiastic. About a hundred miles of rail was laid, linking

Hudson Bay Junction in Saskatchewan with the frontier town of The Pas. There the matter rested for years.

Not until 1910 was further action taken. Then the Canadian government authorized the building of the first stages of the railway. A bridge reached across the Saskatchewan River just outside The Pas. Contracts were let for construction of the railroad. The right-of-way was cut through to the mouth of the Nelson River, where work on the harbour and townsite went on simultaneously. Steel rails reached 332 miles northeast of The Pas. Three big bridges had been constructed. But with the outbreak of the first World War, came shortages of construction materials, of ships and manpower. The work had to be abandoned.

Then during the 1920's, the "On-to-the-Bay Association" waged an active campaign to push the work through to completion. Again the question of the seaport came up. Upon the impartial recommendations of Sir Frederick Palmer of London, England, an eminent authority on port construction, Nelson was rejected as the terminus of the railway, and Churchill selected. Work on the harbour there went on as the railway was repaired and completed. In 1929, steel reached salt water at Churchill, though the line was not officially opened until 1931.

The Pas keeps its importance as a gateway. It is linked by rail with Churchill, and closer, with the mining developments at Flin Flon and Sherridon. A highway was recently completed through to Flin Flon. In winter, tractor trains trundle into the streets of The Pas, hauling in tons of pulpwood, taking out tons of supplies and equipment. The Pas is out-fitting centre for hundreds of prospectors with their geiger counters, and miners with their blasting tools, engaged in extracting wealth from the Pre-Cambrian rock of the Canadian Shield.

But The Pas has become outstanding mostly as the seat of a fur-ranching enterprise. That evening, we met Tommy Lamb, the man responsible for figuratively turning a desert into a gold-mine. He did better than that, actually, for he

saved many a family from going hungry, restored self-respect to men who had lost it.

Fairly tall, slender and vivacious, Tom Lamb's eyes lighted with enthusiasm when he began to speak of the muskrat rehabilitation project he inaugurated. This far-sighted youthful man had no formal schooling, but his father was an Anglican missionary and schoolmaster. Tom grew up in a little trading post his father started amongst the Swampy Crees at Moose Lake. He often worked in the store for his father—and later bought the business from him. He maintains a number of far-flung enterprises, including logging, mining, fur ranching, commercial fishing and flying . . . whatever he does is done with zest.

He talked quickly, his voice rather high-pitched, and with a cadence I recognized only when one of his Indian workmen came in to the office for some information. It was the sing-song melody of Indian speech, with almost a lilt to it, and a remarkable sweetness, as the two men continued in the Cree language.

Tom Lamb's story is known throughout the west, and Manitoba will not forget it quickly. Isn't the whole story in one of the school readers? "In 1902, there were 850,000 muskrat skins shipped from the marshes of Manitoba. By 1926, this number had dropped steadily to 40,000 skins. In later years, these numbers became smaller and smaller. This was true of other districts where the muskrats used to live. Hunters and trappers could no longer make a living, and had to go on relief. Tom Lamb found the answer. In 1930, he first applied to the Manitoba government for permission to try his muskrat-conservation plan on Moose Lake Island."

Simply, his plan was to restore the marshes to their former productiveness. To do this, he knew he would have to build dams and raise water levels, to increase the acreage suitable for muskrat homes; to plant feed (wild rice, cattails) which would encourage the animals to breed in the area; to harvest the furs scientifically; to wipe out muskrats' natural enemies such as foxes, timber wolves and owls.

Tom Lamb built miles of dams, and miles of waterways to bring water into those parched sections. One channel alone is 6,000 feet in length. When he leased that 54,000 acres from the government, there were forty muskrat homes. Now there are over 5,000. In 1931, only 125 rats had been taken there. Just five years later, 26,000 skins were harvested, leaving sufficient breeding stock for propagation.

"And mind you, those five years were the driest Manitoba has ever seen," Tom told us earnestly. "So, of course, when I saw how it was going, I went after more land. Explained to the government the benefit to the fur industry, to the government itself, to the Indians and local trappers . . . did such a good job of presenting my case, that I sold the government on the idea. They used the land themselves — and even took Harold Wells, my supervisor, for the job." He grinned, slightful rueful. "But I don't hold it against them. So long as the people get the money for trapping, what's it matter?"

The Provincial government was thoroughly convinced. 135,000 acres at Summerberry Game Reserve in the delta of the Saskatchewan River was set aside in 1936 for rat rehabilitation under government control, using Tom Lamb's methods. The area produced 126,000 pelts in its first harvest six years later, which sold for \$161,909.00.

The next year brought more than twice as much money into the trappers' pockets. Not only did the government get five cents royalty on each pelt, but it furnished a livelihood for 1,800 families previously on relief. Even during construction of the canals and dams, the project meant pay checks for local workmen.

So remarkable a development naturally fitted in elsewhere in the Province. North, west and south more marshland was rehabilitated in the same way, totalling more than three-and-a-half million acres. This includes areas on the margin of Lake Winnipeg, at Delta and Netley Marshes. In the northern part of the Province, two-and-a-half million acres between God's Lake and Hayes River are primarily concerned with the propagation of beaver.

"The vast rehabilitated marshlands are opening up a new era in Manitoba's fur industry," declared a Game Branch official. "But they are doing more. Ducks and wild geese are flocking to these areas. They are becoming waterfowl breeding ground of the finest calibre, amongst the best protected and extensive on the continent."

Later on the train bound for Churchill, Harold Wells, now with the Game Branch, told us more of the story, of the trappers setting forth in April and of the supervision.

"It's all done in a very orderly manner," he explained. "Those who want to go trapping in the spring when the muskrat pelts are prime, have to sign up ahead of time. They have to be local people of course, and the Indians and veterans are given preference. Whites, half-breeds and Indians all take part. Over a thousand trapped in the local marshes one season. Everyone who can, goes in. Each trapper is allotted a certain zone under a head trapper, who supervises it all, and is paid a proportion of the pelts."

Since this is all marshy country and roadless, the trappers and their supplies are taken in by tractor and sleigh over the frozen marshes and deposited in their zones. They set up their tents. Thousands of wooden stretchers are ready for the skinning. The quota of pelts varies with the estimated muskrat population. For instance in 1947, each trapper was permitted 280 pelts. Each skin is tagged with the metal seal of the Provincial government.

The natives and local trappers were thrilled about the opening of the Summerberry Marsh, which would restore their independence. One, Donald Crane, crippled though he was, insisted on going too. He hobbled around on the ice with a sleigh, using a couple of sticks to push himself.

Each day the traps are visited, cold little brown bodies removed, and the steel traps re-set in the "push-ups," the doorways of the muskrat mounds. Women and children and incapacitated trappers go along to pelt, and flesh the skins and pull them on to the stretching boards. The customary way is to hold the body in one hand, skinning-knife in the

other. But for a firm grip, there's nothing like clenching the skinny rat tail between the teeth.

"And afterwards? Why, they cook and eat the muskrats. Why not? They are herbaceous animals, live very clean lives. Why in some parts of Canada they have 'rat dinners' where people pay two dollars a plate! Some gourmets claim that baked muskrat is something out of this world." It was necessary to watch for the twinkle in Harold Wells' brown eyes to be sure when he was joking. But he wasn't this time.

By the time the quota is filled — not less than ten days, which is insisted upon so that the trappers will not clean out nearby houses but take a few from each—the tractors return for the trappers and their gear. The bags of pelts, counted, graded and labelled are held at central points to be picked up by government barge after spring break-up. They are shipped to Winnipeg for further grading, and there sold at auction.

A popular aspect of the whole operation is the way the payments are made. It is spread into monthly payments of twenty-five dollars. Thus at no time throughout the year will the trapper be penniless. One trapper, for instance, after six years of trapping found himself unable to carry on because of failing eyesight. But he would continue to receive those cheques for more than a year, as a result of accumulated credits. This type of payment has been a boon to storekeepers in The Pas (though housewives complain that the shelves are cleared in outfitting the trappers!). It has meant a great deal to the fur trade in areas roundabout, since the muskrat rehabilitation has benefited all fur-bearing animals.

The Trappers' Festival is the big event of the winter at The Pas, covering three days around the end of January or early in February. A Fur Queen and a retinue of princesses from the smaller communities around, are elected to rule the festivities, the snowshoe races, and the 150-mile dog derby to Cranberry Portage and back. This is the really important event to dog-owners who have been grooming their sled dogs with an eye on the \$1,000 prize. They must return with the same number of dogs as they started, even though

it means carrying a crippled dog on the sled. Rugged? It means that the winner very likely runs most of the time for two days. The entire community whips up excitement over the colourful activities, an excitement which reaches a peak as the first black dots appear on the frozen ice of the river. "They're coming in!"

In the long northern summer evening, we strolled past the new Post Office, beyond the dome of the curling rink, down to the bank of the broad Saskatchewan. Opposite is the Indian village with its little steepled church. Near the bridge is a cairn commemorating Henry Kelsey's journey through this region. Kelsey was the first white man to gaze on the Canadian prairies and to miscall the bison of the plains, the buffalo.

Discoverer of the Canadian prairies. In memory of Henry Kelsey, Hudson's Bay Company fur trader and explorer; the first white man to travel inland from Hudson Bay to Eastern Saskatchewan and to see the Canadian prairies, 1690-1692. The first white person to record the existence of the musk-ox of the north, the buffalo herds and the grizzly bears of our plains.

Henry Kelsey had already had experience with grizzly bears. In fact, the Indians called him "Miss-Top-Ashish" (Little Giant), for killing two grizzlies which attacked him and his Indian companions in northern Manitoba. The grizzlies have long since vanished from the Province, but occasionally a giant skull or jawbone is found to prove that they really existed.

Kelsey was an odd individual. A London street-Arab, he rose to the high position of Governor of York Factory. He had little schooling, yet he kept a journal that in places is the epitome of concise beautiful prose. "One Indian Lying a dying . . . Now not knowing wch would conquer life or Death . . . Last night death ceased (seized him) & this morning his body was burned according to their way." His spelling was far from perfect, yet he compiled a Cree dictionary which was published by the Hudson's Bay Company and used throughout the fur trade. Like Pepys, the

famous diarist of the same era, Kelsey lapses into a foreign language at recording any indiscretions!

Kelsey kept bursting out of the discipline considered suitable for apprentices of those days, to the despair of his superiors. But the London Committee turned that adventurous spirit to good use. In 1688, Kelsey and one Indian companion went on foot two hundred miles north of Churchill to meet any Indians and Eskimos they might, and induce them to bring their furs to the post which was then being built at Churchill. They met not a single person on the way, and returned "appalled by the emptiness of the land." Two years later, he was sent from York Factory for the same purpose amongst the warring inland tribes. Kelsey describes it well himself, in the rhymed introduction to his journal:

Then up the river I with heavy heart
Did take my way and from all English part
To live among the natives of this place
If God permits me for one, two years space.
The inland country of good report hath been
By Indians, but by English not yet seen . . .

Kelsey journeyed up the Hayes River, then through connecting lakes and short portages into the Saskatchewan River, finally into the Carrot, which brought him to the bluff prairies of Saskatchewan. A bend in the river below The Pas, is thought to be where Henry

Gott on ye border of ye Stone Indians Country (Assiniboines)
I took possession on ye 10 Inst. July
And for my Masters I speaking for ym all,
This neck of land I Deering's Point did call.
Distant from hence by Judgment at ye best
From ye house (York Factory) 600 miles southwest
Through rivers wch runs strong with falls
Thirty-three carriages (portages) five lakes in all . . .

Kelsey took an interest in describing the country as he passed through it. "The ground begins for to be dry," probably a great relief after the swampy land he had traversed

already. Farther inland he refers to the prairie as "ye ground being more bared than it used to be" and "ye Buffalo is not like those to ye Northward, their horns growing like an English ox, but black and short."

The route which Kelsey pioneered became a highway for the fur traders. The French, coming in from Lake Winnipeg, used the Saskatchewan to cut off trade going to York Factory. The Hudson's Bay Company, bestirring itself from its "sleep by the Bay," sent out other explorers, such as Anthony Henday and Matthew Cocking. Both made extensive journeys up the Saskatchewan River into the country of the Blackfoot Indians. Samuel Hearne scanned the river for the site of a new post, and built at an expansion in the stream, called Cumberland Lake.

One of the Master Pedlars had a humiliating experience at The Pas, long ago. Alexander Henry, the elder, in 1775 was a "new adventurer" into the country, and suffered for it. "At the head of a stream which falls into the Saskatchewan, we found the Pasquayah village. It consisted of thirty families, lodged in tents of circular form, and composed of dressed ox-skins stretched upon poles twelve feet in length, and leaning against a stake driven into the ground in the centre."

The Indians might be primitive with their housing of buffalo-hide tepees. But they used the technique perfected by robber barons of more civilized countries. Chatique (Pelican) a chief of remarkable size and a corps of armed braves greeted Henry and his party. They were invited into a tent with all civility—but Henry uneasily noted the omission of the peace pipe ceremony. The reason was not long in coming. Chatique demanded a large gift, and pointed out not unreasonably, that if he had a mind to, he could take all they had. The traders could do nothing but agree. Only then, did the pipe of peace circulate. Henry supposed the affair was finished. But before they had gone two miles upstream, they saw a canoe coming behind them. Chatique had thought of something more. A keg of rum he must have.

Waving his spear he threatened death to anyone who opposed him.

We saw that our only alternative was to kill this daring robber or to submit to his exactions. The former part would have been attended with very mischievous consequences; and we therefore curbed our indignation and chose the latter. On receiving the rum, he saluted us with the Indian cry, and departed.

There is no trace of Chatique's village, of course. But history may still be seen in the Anglican Christ Church, which we saw next morning. Here John Smithurst praised the labours of the Cree missionary, Henry Budd. Here Paul Kane was the guest of the Reverend Mr. Hunter and his amiable wife. The missionary station, he recorded "is a neat house, most brilliantly decorated inside with blue and red paint, much to the admiration of his flock."

The present white clapboard church was built in 1896, replacing Mr. Hunter's, and contains furniture made by carpenters of the Franklin Relief Expedition. Sir John Franklin made several trips into the Canadian Arctic, the first two overland. The third and final journey was in search of the Northwest Passage, in two ships, the *Erebus* and the *Terror*.

He sought the route to the Orient, which all men were sure must exist, and which would prove a shortcut to the wealthy trade with the East, instead of the long way round by Cape Horn. The passage does exist, as was proved recently by the epic journey of the R.C.M. Police boat *St. Roch*. But even if the Panama Canal had not rendered it unnecessary, the route could never have more than a limited use, not a great deal more than the Hudson's Bay Company already uses it in supplying northern trading posts.

By 1845, Sir John had been gone two years, two years without a word, and fear grew that disaster had overtaken the expedition, as indeed it had. Search parties from all over the world, especially from England and financed by Lady Franklin, sought the missing men. It was too late. A number

of skeletons were found, and even today, clues and relics continue to be discovered. But the search itself revealed more of the far north than any previous expedition had done.

The first Franklin Relief Expedition was under Sir John Richardson, a close friend of the missing explorer, and one who had accompanied him on earlier journeys. Richardson's men wintered at Cumberland House near the Manitoba border in Saskatchewan during 1847-48. Part of the crew whiled away the time by helping the missionary Mr. Hunter with his building. Tradition says they built him a church, its pews and furnishings as well as furniture for the Mission House. Chairs made of native birch, some large chests of drawers, the font, the pulpit, the communion rail and three chairs in the chancel are the products of their hands.

We entered the empty church that sunny morning, studied the massive lock, and were glad it was not in use at that moment. It is seventeen inches by fourteen! Inside, a type-written screed tells the story of the church, a device often found in these historic churches, and one we appreciated. Hanging on the walls are several tablets, bearing the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer and some scriptures in the Cree language, in Latin characters, not syllabics.

I attended a service there later in the winter, when six little girls in red-and-white choir gowns self-consciously preceded the senior choir into the stalls. The intonations and responses, "*Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law*"—the dignified and beautiful words never fail in their impact.

As we sauntered toward the railway station, we paid little attention to the various whistle calls, until we noticed that one train appeared to be a passenger. People were boarding it. We wondered uneasily if it just might be our train to Churchill. Perhaps living without a calendar, we had lost a day somewhere . . .

"Well, it's the only train for a week," the traffic manager told us in his office.

"But the schedule said tomorrow . . ."

"Schedule's just been changed." The whistle shrilled.

The train pulled out of the station, while we stared at him in consternation. "But say, you have your car in town? I'll have a lad drive you out to the first station, and he can store the car here for you until you get back. But you'll have to hurry!"

We raced for the hotel: Fortunately we had not unpacked much. Then out of town, tearing past the railway turnoff to Flin Flon and Sherridon, past the deserted hospital. We reached Clearwater Lake twenty-five miles out, well ahead of the train. We were going to Churchill after all, that was assured.

9

North on the Hudson Bay Railway

The "Special" — Wabowden — Thicket Portage
Gillam — Churchill River

SO THERE WE SAT on the platform of the station at Clearwater, or Atikameg, as it appears on some maps. The lake is the summer resort for the citizens of The Pas, and well-known for its whitefish, the "deer of the lake," according to the Indian name. With time on our hands now, we chatted with the station master.

"Train's going to be a little late. You folks are sure lucky." We agreed. "Got a room reserved for tonight at Wabowden? Should. They're always crowded, and the only way to make sure is to wire ahead." Richard went to attend to this, thinking it not really necessary, however. "Otherwise you'll ^{have} to sleep on the train," the station master added.

At that time of year, there was only one mixed train a week up to Churchill, which took three days to make the journey each way. It was called in friendly disrespect, "The Muskeg Limited." Later in the season another train was added, which rocketed (by comparison) the entire distance of 510 miles in twenty-four hours. That was really travelling. Nowadays a third fast train is added in summer.

"Too bad you ain't going on the excursion — they sure have fun," said the station agent reflectively. "Live on the train for a whole week, go to Flin Flon, hunt white whales

at Churchill. The tourists sure like it. 'Course you couldn't go this year. It's over-subscribed a long time ahead. Mostly Americans. Some of 'em have been going up every year since it started."

The sub-Arctic annual tours to Churchill are amongst the Canadian National Railway's most popular trips. For two weeks each August, the line belongs to The Special, the train de luxe, which is dining-car, hotel and playroom combined. Stops are arranged so the tourists see all points of interest, but without repetition. For the whole round-trip of 2,300 miles from Winnipeg, and from Regina the previous week, the train is the hotel-on-wheels. No scurrying for hotel accommodations—something we had not appreciated until this trip; no worrying about where to eat—and that, too, counts for something. The meals are the standard of railway meals elsewhere in Canada, which means that they are excellent.

The Special gets an enthusiastic reception along the way. Dauphin whips up a reception; afternoon tea on the attractive station grounds follows a motor drive, and the band plays. The Pas on the return trip "gives the folks a big hand." Sherridon takes small parties underground to see the workings of a mine. Flin Flon residents open their homes, offer their cars for drives out to pretty Beaver Lake, and throw a party at night. Churchill puts on a dance that lasts until dawn.

The Special carries its excursionists on that side jaunt up the Canadian National Railway line to Flin Flon, one of Canada's most remarkable mining towns, set on the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border. The train puffs through forests of jackpine and spruce, skirting beautiful Lake Athapapuskow for much of its ninety-one miles. Cranberry Portage, halfway along, is becoming a popular resort for hunting and fishing, and dreams of a great tourist future.

Flin Flon got its name in a strange way. In the early twenties, a handful of prospectors searched for minerals in that section of the Pre-Cambrian Shield. As they sat around the camp fire at lunch one day, a prospector noticed a

weatherbeaten book lying beneath a log. With that wilderness hunger for the printed page, all the men read the story. But they never did learn what happened to the main character, Joseph Flintabatty Flonatin of the Society for the Exploration of Unexplored Regions. The last few pages were missing.

But the pages that were there held a fantastic adventure story. The fabulous Flintabatty Flonatin learned of a strange and wondrous city at the bottom of a lake. In order to explore this region, he built a submarine, and dived down, down, down . . . for two weeks. There he found the Sunless City, where things were done in reverse. Coinage was of tin. But the pavements were of gold. The inhabitants were Amazons, fierce strong women who ruled while their husbands kept house. Fear of that fate sent Flonatin scrambling up through the crater of an extinct volcano.

The prospectors hugely enjoyed the preposterous yarn, even though it was incomplete. Then one day, one of them came upon a conical hole in the ground. It was about ten feet across, and looked as though it might possibly be an old volcano.

"Well, boys, I guess we've found old Flin Flon's mine," said one as a joke.

His humour was much appreciated. And when later on they did strike it rich, they named their mine for the fictitious explorer. Joseph Flintabatty Flonatin had no stranger fiction career than the town which has made his name immortal.

Those barren-looking rocks have produced tremendous wealth, a town with a population of 11,000 souls, where there was no one at all in 1928, and a \$25 million payroll. The Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting Company is one of the largest producers of zinc and copper on the continent. Astride the Saskatchewan-Manitoba border, its location makes for all kinds of interprovincial headaches over royalties, workmen's compensation, labour regulations and statistics of mineral production.

People there play golf on the nine-hole course on the bottom of a lake, drained, of course. They swim in man-

made Phantom Lake. Sewers are above ground, laid over the flinty granite rocks, and sidewalks built above them. Streets are interrupted by stairs which climb the rocks to reach the next level, of which there are many. Like most mining towns, Flin Flon does have a bleak look about it — but its citizens have tremendous civic pride.

Northeast of Flin Flon is the mining community of Sherridon, notable for its production of base metals plus some gold. But in the last couple of years, it has become more important as the entrance to mining fields farther north. Lynn Lake area promises very large deposits of copper and nickel ore, and areas are being prospected farther north all the time.

We perched on the edge of the station platform, wishing we could see Flin Flon and Sherridon, not just hear about them. Then came the long-drawn-out whistle of the train. It roared around the curve at Clearwater Lake, paused very briefly for us, and we were on our way north.

"Are you the folks that missed the train at The Pas?" That question was our introduction to train companions who by the end of the week had become friends. On board were Mounties, returning to positions in the far north. Black-frocked priests. Trappers and miners and prospectors. Scientists, commercial travellers, government officials and Indian families.

Almost at once we met Mr. Devenny, assistant superintendent of the Hudson Bay Railway. "I see you made the train all right," he said with a friendly smile. "You'll enjoy the trip." He was right about that.

"But look, Mr. Devenny, this timetable is wrong. It's evidently a typographical error. We take three days to go up to Churchill, but on the way back, we seem to miss a day."

He laughed. "It's not a misprint. That's quite right, we do stop over for a whole day at the divisional point of Wabowden." I never got it quite clear *why* we did this, but he was right about that, too.

The train was fairly full, but people got off here and

there along the way. Some folks went holidaying at Clearwater Lake, where there are a couple of lodges. A Ukrainian couple got off at a lonely section-house. Most of the way was through forests of jackpine, not very large. Before long, we became acquainted with the people in our car, and chatted away like old friends. The newsagent-cook is an important person on the Muskeg Limited. He sells magazines to the passengers, of course, and to people who flock on the train at different points. Bananas, oranges, biscuits and popcorn were not very remarkable to us who were coming from the city. But they were to the people at the various stops, whose only contact with these luxuries is when the train comes in from the south. Soft drinks and ice cream didn't last long, with the crowds of Indians who came on at Cormorant Lake and at other points along the line. There was none left for the next day, or stations farther north.

Cormorant Lake, sprawling on both sides of the railroad is a great waterfowl sanctuary and breeding place for geese and ducks, including the "crow duck" for which it was named. It is included in the forest reserve which extends south to the Flin Flon spur-line, with headquarters and air base in the village of Cormorant. The village is set on granite shoulders, split into great flat squares. The schoolyard is as flat as a tennis court.

Here the whole community streamed down to the train. Dignified Indian men with noble faces, studying a confession magazine before buying. Straight-haired matrons with little children clinging to their colourful wide skirts. Girls with dark lovely eyes and permanently-waved hair, giggling and pushing. Little boys who hurtled through the coaches from end to end, out one door and back in through the other. Such fun! Even the dogs came down to sniff at the wheels and lie between the rails in the shade of the coaches.

"It's a safe bet the natives find the tourists just as amusing as the tourists find the Indians," said Richard laughing.

At noon the cook made dinner for about twenty of the passengers. The others had brought their lunches. We sat

in four sections at the back of the coach where tables were installed. It was no less than wonderful, the food that could be prepared in that tiny galley.

At Mile 83, Wekusko (sweet herb) there were tractors lined up, waiting for winter to get them into action again. During the winter, tractors haul in vast quantities of mining equipment to the new gold discoveries on Snow Lake, where a new town is under way. Herb Lake, closer to the railway, is also a mining camp which has had an up-and-down career.

A pretty young woman with her little daughter got off here. "Only fifteen miles of canoeing, and I'll be home. No, I don't have to paddle," she said in answer to our surprise, "my husband is meeting me. It's nice to get Outside, but it's always nicer to get back home again."

Wekusko, Pipun, Sipiwesk and Matage, descriptive Cree words are now station names. Other names along the way recall memories from the history books. There's La Perouse, for the French admiral and geographer who captured Fort Prince of Wales and York Factory in 1782. Button is for Sir Thomas, an early navigator and explorer who discovered the estuary of the Nelson River in 1612. Medard commemorates des Groseilliers, Radisson's senior partner; Nonsuch and Wivenhoe, the ships they sailed in.

Some of the names are borrowed from men who knew the railroad—Tyrrel, famed Canadian geologist and historian; Luke, for Luke Clemens, a well-known trader reputed to be half-brother to Mark Twain. Jacam, for J. A. Campbell, member of the Legislature, and one of the region's biggest boosters. Wabowden, named for Chief Engineer W. A. Bowden.

Around 4.30 in the afternoon, we reached Wabowden at Mile 135, the first divisional point. By that time, we were ready to stretch our legs outside. But we still didn't understand the abandon with which passengers hustled off the train, and raced across the field to the hotel. We learned in a few minutes.

"I'm sorry," said the neat red-haired hostess, "but we haven't any rooms left. They've all been wired for already."

How we blessed that station master down at Clearwater who saved us from having to sleep on the seats of the coaches.

We spent a pleasant evening looking around the village, strolling up past the Hudson's Bay Company store, and out to the end of the village. We prowled down a road that led past a cemetery, well-laid out, but without a single headstone as yet. Despite mosquitoes, Richard went swimming in one of the two small lakes between which the village is situated.

On our return stopover at Wabowden, a special car pulled in to the station during the evening, carrying Major MacLachlan, the superintendent of the railway, a crisp sandy-haired man, and "Ned" McLean.

The latter was the eccentric multi-millionaire contractor who had much to do with building the railway. From Merrickville, Ontario, he had had the whim to travel the railway once more and was doing it in his own inimitable way. Many astonishing tales are told of this strange man, both of his extreme generosity and his extreme stubbornness. He seemed a fantastic character to us at that time, but we found good reports of him even on his home grounds, later. At one time, he caused a sensation in Ontario papers, by posing as "Mr. X," the stranger who showered ten dollar bills around military hospitals.

Another of his idiosyncracies was the finishing touch he applied to his works, a monument to the "Sons of Martha." Each of these cairns — and they are widely separated — bears a tablet, with several verses from Kipling's poem. Ned McLean never forgot that the hard-working "little" construction man was a toiler, and one to be honoured and respected. The monument at Churchill stands near the railway station.

Wabowden is in the Manitoba parallel of Ontario's clay belt, and soil specialists declare it can grow excellent crops when the time comes for it to be developed. Certainly we saw good gardens near the station, and toward the end of the village is an outpost of the Brandon Experimental Farm, where wheat, oats and vegetables are grown.

From Wabowden to Manitou Rapids on the Nelson River, the railroad runs between the Nelson and Grass Rivers. One particularly pretty place is Thicket Portage at Mile 184. The village is located on the portage trail between Wintering and Landing Lakes, once a well-travelled canoe route from Nelson House to Norway House. Since Landing Lake drains into the Nelson River, it formed a fairly direct canoe route before the days of airplanes.

"That's where the beaver holding-pens are," said Mr. Devenny. "They hold the nuisance beaver there."

"What is a nuisance beaver?" I asked. "Something like a rogue elephant?"

"Those are beaver which make a nuisance of themselves by damming up the railway culverts, causing floods over the right-of-way and weakening the fills. We have an arrangement with the Game Branch of Manitoba now, so that game guardians live-trap such beaver and the Air Service transports them into other areas, where they are useful."

There was no opportunity to see the holding-pens at the moment. By the next week, however, on our return from Churchill, we disembarked with Harold Wells at Thicket Portage. The difficulty of getting to Wabowden to catch up with our train had been solved by Mr. Devenny. After practically signing our lives away, we were permitted to travel on the speed-car the forty miles to the divisional point. That extra day's stopover was just what we needed.

We learned about the beaver, nuisance and otherwise. Beaver close to a railway track seem to consider the culverts to be merely defective dams, which they are morally bound to repair. On more than one occasion, they have plugged large culverts, forming a pond alongside the roadbed, so that the train crew receives a "slow order" from the dispatcher, forcing the train to travel at reduced speed between specified mileages.

In one instance, section men struggled all day to pull out a dam, only to find it replaced that night. Extra locomotives and crews and loads of gravel finally overcame the nuisance, but at great cost to the Hudson Bay Railway.

Something had to be done. Otherwise the section men would shoot the beaver, law or no law. The Manitoba Game Branch had to take steps, or the railwaymen would not be responsible for their actions.

The Game Branch was actually only too pleased to co-operate, since it meant these beaver could be live-trapped and transported to stock up areas barren of the valuable fur-bearers. Now two men patrol the railway throughout the summer, acting on tips from the section men, as to new and menacing beaver locations.

"Sometimes the section men have to take steps before the government trappers can arrive, although they are not permitted to trap the beaver," said Mr. Devenny. "One culvert was dammed by the beavers directly under the centre of the roadbed, so that it was difficult to reach from either end. The dams are very solidly constructed, and it isn't easy to break them up. The men used long poles with hooks on them, because it wouldn't be safe to enter the culvert. A man might get trapped and drowned in the rush of water and mud once the dam was broken."

Another time a section man hung up a lighted lantern to discourage the beaver, until the trappers should arrive. But somehow the beaver managed to bump the pole on which the lantern was hanging. Water struck and shattered the hot glass, and the flame went out. Naturally, the beaver went on with their work — they didn't need the light.

"And after that," Mr. Devenny continued, "the section men hung up a raincoat at the entrance to the culvert, thinking it might act as a scarecrow, and that its swishing movement in the water would frighten off the beaver. It worked for a while, until one thoughtful fellow cut down the pole, and stuck it in the dam."

At Thicket Portage, we were lucky enough to meet Dick Fourre and his companion trapper, as they brought in a couple of "nuisances." They had set their Bailey traps — something like a heavy wire-mesh suitcase — in a likely spot, and had taken two beaver. They re-set the traps, and brought these in strong wooden boxes on the speed-car soon after

we got off the train. Jack Cooke helped to transport them to the little frame building down by the margin of Wintering Lake.

We trooped in after them. The beaver are kept in concrete cages, subdivided into pen and water-tank, and covered with strong wire netting. Each day the tanks are cleaned and filled with fresh water. Each day, Jack gathers white poplar ("popple", he called it) leaves and branches for their rations while guests of the government. He let us help him sweep out the cages and refill the water-tanks. It was amusing to see the beavers' alarm as the dirty water ebbed out, and the frantic efforts they made to stop the drain.

"We sure are busy just about right now," Dick confided to Harold Wells. "Keeps us going some. All the beaver must be busy building dams near the railroad right now. We been shuttling up and down the line trapping here and there."

But the beaver don't stay long in the holding-pens. In short order they are transported by rail or plane to some barren or depleted area where the trapper is attempting to build up the beaver population. They sometimes go to government fur preserves.

"To get started in beaver means a lot to a trapper," said Harold Wells. As Supervisor of Registered Trapplines, Mr. Wells had vast experience in dealing with furs and trappers. "One fellow, Billy Harris, carried two beaver in gunny sacks to the middle of his trapping area. He had visions of beaver lodges throughout the whole area, lots of them. Well, beaver are monogamous so far as we know, and these two wouldn't have anything to do with one another. They just went their different ways, and Billy saw no more of them. So we're going to make sure he gets mates next time."

After September, it is not practical to live-trap beaver, nuisance or not. By that time it is too late for them to build their lodges and get in a winter store of food in some new location. Moreover at that time of year, they are susceptible to pneumonia in holding-pens. The beaver who

tamper with the railroad so late in the season pay the extreme penalty for their indiscretion.

In the evening we strolled down the portage trail leading to Landing Lake, a beautiful sheet of water with plenty of pretty islands. On the trail we met tall Joe Hermanski and his tiny vivacious wife, borrowed their canoe for a short paddle around the lake. It was a lovely evening and, out on the lake, free from mosquitoes. We watched several kinds of ducks swimming around, and Mr. Wells told us more about beaver trapping.

"The Indians preferred to trap by the community system, rather than by registered trapline. So they operate on a share-the-crop basis, which we had to work out carefully. It just couldn't be done in the office. We had to take it into the field, and work it out on the spot with the native conservation officers, and with the trappers themselves. They've been pretty pleased about it, and so are we."

The 2-4 scale and the 1-5 scale supplants the old system of five beavers per trapper, which didn't quite fill the bill. It left empty-handed the old people and the women who couldn't go trapping. The present arrangement is a minor masterpiece of social welfare.

Where the number of beaver is small, the 2-4 scale is used. That is, a married man may take four beaver per year, the single man only two since he has fewer responsibilities. Elsewhere, if the crop is good, tokens are issued on a progressive scale, one token for each beaver which may be taken. Studying the social position and responsibilities of each member of the group, the Game Branch worked out the following scale:

1 beaver	Girls over 16	Not on Family Allowance
2 beaver	Boys over 16	Not on Family Allowance
3 beaver	Married women	Period of great contributions
5 beaver	Married man	Home-building, bread-winning
4 beaver	Widower (a)	With children, or with widowed mother, still keeps up home
3 beaver	Widower (b)	Does not keep up home, therefore lessened needs
2 beaver	Widow	Can get on well with this.

"Family allowance takes care of children under sixteen adequately," he went on to explain, "so we don't set aside any beaver especially for their needs. Old folks get the old age pension, which is sufficient there. You'll notice that neither boy nor girl ever goes back to that status once they are out of it. Their age and contribution to society is respected in the larger allotment."

We later visited the Hermanski cabin under the trees, admired their large vegetable garden, and then walked with them to the foot of the fire tower, where Harold Wells had once been on duty. At the foot of the tower was an Indian cemetery, some of the graves enclosed with wooden palings. Several of them were surmounted with weatherbeaten poles on which was nailed a square of white cloth.

"Those are windigo flags," Mr. Wells explained. "There are more of them on the cemetery on the island in Wintering Lake. We'll go over there tomorrow if you like." We liked, but we wanted to know right now what they meant. "Well, in a way, the Indians are just playing it safe. Most of them are Christians . . . that is, they go to church. But they still have many of the superstitious fears of their ancestors. These windigo flags flutter in the wind and keep the windigoes (evil spirits) away from their graves, or perhaps from stealing their souls."

Some of the graves on the island also had pointed headboards shaped like arrowheads. Generally there were crosses, greatly weatherbeaten. The Indians have a distrust of graveyards, and in fact, they consider there is something ghoulish about pottering around where the dead are buried. This attitude is not confined to the Crees, but is characteristic of most Indian tribes.

Pik-wi-ton-ei (accent evenly distributed) is the next village where the train halted to take on water. The village has a pastoral charm, and a population both native and white. It is also a spot where sportsmen and prospectors take off into the wilderness, or canoeists take to the water to visit Nelson House over on the Burntwood River system.

"You're looking at the Nelson River," Mr. Devenny pointed out at Mile 241. We had paralleled its course for many miles, but here we saw it for the first time. "That's a drainage system from the foothills of the Rockies, and from the Canadian Shield, pouring through that narrow canyon."

From a height of a hundred feet, the Manitou or Devil Rapids below appeared deceptively smooth. But generations of canoes have discovered the genuinely "bad medicine" of its whirlpools. The cantilever bridge above the rapids is over 600 feet in length. But the fascinating feature about it is that it forms a huge arc, so that the train is actually a semi-circle at Manitou Crossing.

Ilford, a small settlement at Mile 286, seemed to doze beside the tracks. Tractors were lined up at a freighting shed, waiting for winter. Here we picked up Jack Staunton, the game guardian heading to Churchill for a meeting with the trappers. "Ilford's a good place if you ever want to go tractor-freighting," he said as a joke. I didn't plan it at the time; but I was back at Ilford next winter doing just that.

We stopped that second night at Gillam, the second divisional point. Rooms were even scarcer, and lacked the pleasant atmosphere of the previous hotel. During the evening, we explored along the sandy bank of the Kettle River just south of the village. Fishermen claim it has lots of speckled trout, but not being fishermen, we didn't stop to test the truth of the story. Anyway, the mosquitoes drove us away. The swallows were swooping after them, but were greatly out-numbered. We paused only to marvel at all the swallows' nests plastered to the inner walls of the round-house.

Gillam is five miles south of that third bridge, the second crossing of the Nelson River. Richard was anxious to get a photograph of the long bridge as the train passed over it. So bright and early, at 4.30 he was trudging along the right-of-way to the Nelson River. Again Mr. Devenny had thoughtfully made arrangements, and the engineer promised to stop for a minute on the other side to pick him up.

The train whistled for the bridge. There, far below, was

the small figure of the photographer. But that was a steep and rocky bank. We were all peering out of the windows, wondering if he would reach the train in time. Again the whistle blew, the train gathered itself, pulled ahead. No Richard. After ten minutes he appeared. He'd been chatting on the last coach with some of the trainmen. We all breathed more easily.

This anchored cantilever bridge, 1,003 feet long, spans the river only thirty feet above the surface of the water. The great curling waves could be seen at close hand, as the torrent ripped over the rocks, dropping from the Laurentian Plateau to the Hudson Bay lowlands and sea level. Unquestionably, Kettle Rapids will generate great hydro-electric power in the future, supplying towns and industries yet unborn. It is estimated that in the series of seven rapids above and below the Crossing, there is a total drop of two hundred feet. With the immense volume of water which drains through the Nelson River, there is a possible development of over 90,000 horsepower at low water, and nearly twice that during six months of the year.

It was at this bridge that the northern course of the railroad paused in indecision for ten years, standing firm and durable, but leading nowhere. Of the whole railway only the three bridges did not need replacement. The work of reconstructing that neglected railway is a tale of heroism and engineering genius. Ties had rotted. Muskeg fills had burned or blown away. Iron had corroded. Telephone poles had been heaved out of the ground by frost action.

Methods never tried before in railway construction were used, and the very harshness of the country was turned to conquering it. Steel rails were laid over frozen muskeg. Some thirty miles of duck mats, copied from those used on the battlefields of France, were laid down to permit construction gangs to reach their work over wet areas. Tripods were erected to support the telephone lines.

From the Nelson River, the course swings due north at Amery, having decided to run the 155 miles to Churchill instead of the first choice Port Nelson. Miles of railway

stretched ahead straight as a die. The trees dwindled in size, became small shrubs often centuries old. Branches grew only on the south side of the trunk, due to the chill blasts that sweep down from the Arctic. The north sides seemed to have been sheared off with a sharp knife.

"Takes two of them lop-sided spruces to make a Christmas tree", said a trapper sitting opposite us, with reverse pride.

In the "land of little sticks" the track sags and rises as the train passes over it. Yet the eternal frost lies just a few inches beneath the muskeg surface. Tripods now replaced ordinary telephone poles, moss-grown, and we often saw woodpeckers fly out of the holes they had chiselled into them. At Herchmer, where we stopped for coal and water, the stunted trees gave way to tundra, barren lands, stretching away to the horizon, a monotonous plain. Yet there is colour in it, subtle tones of ochre, grey, green and white. Arctic cotton bloomed in the muskeg sloughs, where we saw wading birds with long beaks. Curlews, godwits, avocets? I can never remember which is which. Purple fireweed, wild sweet pea, salmon pink of Indian paintbrush, creamy reindeer or caribou moss, and the butter-coloured bakeberry put to the blush the word "barren."

"The muskeg goes down about six feet, where the clay and boulders start. Nobody knows how deep the frost goes, but it has been tested to a depth of forty feet at least," said Mr. Devenny. "They've found walrus tusks and skulls in the frozen ground around here."

We had seen evidence of the immense herds of caribou in the piles of antlers and bones that lay bleaching in the sunlight, mute evidence of the migrating herds that have sometimes forced the train to halt, and even held it up for hours. Of course we hoped to see the big migrations, but it wasn't the right time of year.

The passengers stood around on the gravel roadbed, watching the blonde youngsters of the Ukrainian sectionman, as they picked fluffy heads of Arctic cotton. We found yellow bakeberries, not yet ripened to their golden colour. The train whistled. "All abo-o-ard!"

"Where's your husband?" asked the Mountie's wife. "I saw him up on the coal tower taking pictures just before we left."

"I can't keep track of him," I admitted. "But he'll manage." He turned up again, this time with blackened hands and grimy face, having got the high-angle shot he wanted. Herchmer was not very beautiful from the ground.

Finally, the track swung close to the river, the long-awaited Churchill. This tremendous water-system, full of rapids, lake-expansions of all sizes, sprawls across the three Prairie Provinces, from the western border of Alberta into Hudson Bay. Rising in Methye Lake and flowing eastward nearly eleven hundred miles, it is a beautiful clear stream, but navigable only by canoe. Rapids commence immediately above tidal water, and are frequent throughout its length.

With such a length and such a variation in its course, the Churchill has many different names for its different parts. But it seems that practically everyone had a name for the river itself. The Chipewyan Indians who knew it first called it "Tzabdezem", or Metal River. The Crées called it Missinibi, or Missinipi, Big River. The English fur traders named it Churchill, after the Duke of Marlborough, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company. The Pedlars identified it as the English River, because by that route the Indians carried their furs to the posts on Hudson Bay.

Danish River, *Rivière Danoise* and the River of Strangers were names which came from a common source. We were by now opposite Munck's Cove, a little indentation on the mighty river, where a Danish expedition had fought it out against the subarctic winter, and lost.

Captain Jens Munck of the Danish Royal Navy was the one to discover the excellent bottleneck harbour of the Churchill River in 1619. But though he claimed the country for his king, Christian IV of Denmark, the discovery did him or his country little good. The Danes were unprepared for the cruel Canadian winter, the like of which they had never known. But the season was advanced, and they could not hope to get through the ice of Hudson Straits. They decided

to winter at Churchill River. The *Unicorn* and *Lamprey* were sailed about five miles upstream from the capes guarding the entrance to the channel, and the men set themselves to live aboard ship. The goods they placed on shore, in a little shed which they built as a warehouse.

It wasn't too bad until around Christmas, when scurvy struck the company. Day by day, members of the crew sickened and died. At first, the dead were buried. But so many died that their weakened survivors could not keep pace. Many bodies were merely heaved overboard onto the ice of the river, then sank when spring came. Munck watched the despair and horror, wore himself thin and wan tending the sick after the surgeon died. He became ill himself, and fully expected death. His farewell message is one to bring a lump to the throat:

Inasmuch as I have now no more hope of life in this world, I request for the sake of God, if any Christian men should happen to come here, that they will bury in the earth my poor body, together with the others which are found here . . . Herewith, goodnight to all the world: and my soul into the hands of God.

When the ice broke up in the river, only Munck and two of his crew of sixty-five had survived the grim experience. Feebly they bored holes in the *Unicorn* to sink her, intending to return and claim her. Weakly they hoisted sail on the smaller *Lamprey*, and made the tedious and dangerous voyage back to Denmark. They never returned.

The Danes had encountered that same emptiness which Kelsey experienced later in the same century: "Christian men" did not happen to come to that spot until 1686, when the river was re-discovered. But the Indians did come to the river just a few months after Munck had left. They were accustomed to spending some of the summer months on the bay. What was their awed horror to find such a profusion of dead bodies, clad in unfamiliar raiment. But their awe turned to amazement when the tide went out, and revealed a great ship.

Hesitantly they went aboard her, and found to their delight all kinds of wonderful things. Mirrors, clothing, food, nails and dozens of things which they had never seen before dazzled their eyes. They carried them ashore to dry them around the fire. Their joy was short-lived. Ignorant of the use and qualities of gun powder, they dried it out too, over the open flame. The kegs of gunpowder exploded, and half the company was blown into eternity. In terror the Indians retreated, leaving the doomed place to the dead. Thereafter they called it River-of-the-Strangers.

Decades later, when the Hudson's Bay Company set up its wooden fort on the shore of the little cove, they came upon three brass cannon embedded in the river flats. They bore the insignia "C 4," for Christian IV of Denmark. The cannon were sent to England, and quite without regard for the tourists of the twentieth century, the Hudson's Bay Company sold them to a second-hand merchant.

As we passed the cove, we could see across the flat country, a gleaming white building, the grain elevator at Churchill. It was built while the railway was under construction. Almost as soon as the last spike was driven, two ships sailed from England for grain from the two-and-half-million bushel elevator. The port could not possibly operate on a year-round basis, obviously. But the short open season was considered by western grain growers to justify the cost of building and maintaining the port.

For years, the railway and harbour failed to warrant the great hopes that were built on them, a strong argument against them in the minds of many Canadians. Those were the years of depression, when railroads everywhere felt the pinch. World War II followed immediately, during which time no wheat could be shipped from the northern seaport, due to submarine activities and the difficulty of convoy. The grain lay in the great columns of the elevators awaiting the end of hostilities. Even today, the port operates at a deficit, which however, is shrinking year by year.

But during the war years, the railway line justified its existence. The Hudson Bay Railway carried more freight

than at any time in its previous career. The Army camp, American at first, later Canadian, required tons of supplies for construction. Heavy machinery and equipment were hauled for the airport. There was no question but that the 510-mile line was essential.

And now we were drawing closer, and could see the station, the small houses beyond. Passengers gathered up their parcels. There was the last-minute touch of lipstick on women coming home, and wanting to look their best. But suddenly we weren't going to Churchill at all! We were being switched at the "Y"—and *backed* into the station on the windy flats of Churchill.

10

Northern Seaport

Churchill — Prince of Wales's Fort — Sloop's Cove

PRACTICALLY everyone in town came to meet the train — trucks, army jeeps, people hoping for parcels, trappers getting supplies ready for setting out on the traplines again. Local people to buy any magazine which might have survived the trip; to pick up dry-cleaning sent down a couple of weeks ago by the news agent. Indians, finding it fun to sit on the train seats, even though it wasn't going anywhere.

Most of those on the train scurried down the gravelled road to the hotel to make sure of space. We had wired in advance, but even that might not be sufficient at the one hotel which existed at that time. Richard hurried off with the rest of the passengers, leaving the bags to be picked up later. But I beat him and the rest of the crowd to the hotel. Standing there amongst our luggage, looking perhaps a little forlorn, I was pleasantly surprised when a young soldier offered me — and it — a lift to the hotel in his jeep. So we cheerfully hurtled past the others on the road.

We stayed at Churchill for a week.

At first glance, no place could be more drear or desolate than Churchill, set up there on the bare rocks, between the river and Hudson Bay on a prong of land thrust out into the salt water. The wind blows ceaselessly through the treeless village. But Churchill, like any place else on earth, has its attractions, and its kindly people.

To the traveller fresh from trees and lawns and flowerbeds, the village has a forbidding aspect. There is not a tree in the place to break the chill winds sweeping over the sloping rocks. A few tiny kitchen gardens, like that at the Post Office, have been painfully achieved by gathering up a spadeful of soil here, another there. They must be built up from the frozen ground in order to produce any harvest. But with long hours of sunlight, the vegetables grow to extraordinary size. There is a spattering of buildings around the railroad station—the town site. Well off toward the bay is the Roman Catholic mission, with its famous altar mural of husky dogs and Indians, and its little museum of Eskimo life.

About four miles farther out is the military camp, Fort Churchill, and the airfield built by the U.S. Army in 1942. Sold to Canada, it was used for the Canadian Army's Exercise Lemming in 1944, for Operation Muskox, and Churchill Project—Arctic vehicle trials. In 1946, it became the Joint Services Arctic Testing and Experimental Station, with a good-sized garrison of Canadian and American forces. A naval station has recently been erected along the road to Fort Churchill.

From the townsite a gravel road leads out across the sloughs to the grain elevator and the harbour buildings, and another collection of small houses. In the same direction, but up on the rock mound, is the radio station and the Mounted Police barracks. While the harbour was being built, the Dominion Government maintained control of all the lands on Cape Merry, the eastern prong forming the estuary of the Churchill River. When construction work was finished, much of this territory was handed back to the Province of Manitoba. The Provincial area was laid out into streets and avenues—named Kelsey, Franklin, etc—but there has been scant regard for these paper plans. It is distinctly difficult to adhere to town planning when springs and rocks keep interfering with the straight lines.

The hotel did not serve meals, but we could eat at the "Beanery" run by the Canadian National Railways. You

had to be there right when the food was served! And no snacking—just meals. Since then a couple of cafés have opened shop in Churchill to supply the odd cup of coffee even out of meal hours.

But the Beanery was fun. We sat at long tables covered with oilcloth with the trappers "Windy Lake" Smith and "Barren Ground" Smith, with the prospector "Tennessee," with Fredericksson, a Danish scientist who was making records of Eskimo folk lore, with Corporal and Mrs. McLaughlin of the Mounties on their way to Baker Lake, with apprentices of the Hudson's Bay Company heading north to Repulse Bay, with a young doctor in the Indian Service heading for Chesterfield . . . Churchill characters are definitely not "rubber-stamps."

Since the next day was Sunday, we had plenty of time to walk around the village, down to the sandy beach where the waves came rolling in salty and rough all across the broad Hudson Bay. There was a wonderful surf running down there, but it was hard to keep our eyes open long enough to see it. The wind almost whipped us off our feet—and this was July, the height of midsummer. Great angry breakers, green in spots but brown with the sand it had churned up and topped with crests of foam, rolled in at our feet, and broke with crashes on the smooth rocks farther along.

We sauntered up the gravel road, past the narrow-gauge track used in construction days when the harbour buildings were being erected. As we crossed the wharf in front of the elevators, we could see the white whales (belugas, a species of porpoise) feeding out in the river, coming up to blow from time to time. Close at hand we could see them rising and submerging. Farther out it was hard to distinguish between whales and white crests of waves, kicked up in the battle of tide and wind and current.

Churchill looks back more than three centuries to its beginning. Sailing vessels of the early explorers braved the menace of the ice floes to penetrate into Hudson Bay, thinking it was the water route to the Orient. In 1610,

Henry Hudson steered the *Discovery* into the unknown, and in the great bay ended his career no one knows exactly where, abandoned by the mutinous crew who fled with his ship. Two years after him, came Sir Thomas Button, so sure of reaching the East, that he carried letters of introduction to the rulers of any Eastern countries he might reach.

The first to enter Churchill Harbour was the unfortunate Jens Munck. Beyond the yellow-painted bunkhouses, dormitories and residences belonging to the Harbours Board, we climbed some bald rocks to find at the top a cairn to his memory. The tablet read:

Port Churchill. Discovered in 1619 by the ill-fated Danish expedition under Jens Munck. In 1689, the Hudson's Bay Company built the first Fort Churchill, which in the same year was destroyed by fire. In 1717 the Company rebuilt Fort Churchill, for nearly 200 years its most northerly post on the bay, and the starting point for many Arctic explorations. The Hudson Bay Railway was completed to the point on 1st April, 1929.

After Munck's disastrous expedition, the river was ignored or forgotten for over half a century. Grimington and Abraham, in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, re-discovered it. They enthusiastically reported it as a natural location for a trading post. The Committee pondered, then resolved "that the Churchill River Bee settled this yeare with a Good Shipp, a Competent Cargo for Trade, and Materialls for White Whale fishings".

So in 1689, men set to work to build a wooden trading post, and Henry Kelsey trekked north to drum up business and battle an "abundance of muskaters." Half-hearted attempts were made to establish a white whale fishery at the mouth of the river, but the men's hearts were not in their work. Twenty-eight casks of whale oil were the sole result, Churchill's first export. But the post was not to prosper. With no customers in sight, and discontented with the whole business, the men were profoundly unhappy. "... so Badd that after they had built it, I believe they was so Disscouraged that they sett it a fire to Run away by the



light of it," declared the testy Captain Knight, when he came to the scene.

Certainly the wooden fort burned down. But with the well-known tenacity of the great company, a fur-trading post was eventually set up at the mouth of the Churchill River, and a whaling station established. This post has endured to the present time, though it has moved across the river to the townsite.

James Knight with twenty-five men left York Factory for Churchill River in July of 1717, to establish the fort. "I never see such a miserable place in my life," wrote the doughty forthright old skipper. "Here is neither fish nor fowl nor venison. But I believe it will be good for the Company's interest in time." He set up the post in much the same place as the previous one, built it of scraggy timber on the site where Munck's men had wintered. It was the logical choice, for there was fresh water not too far away. "Here is not place to build at the river, but at the outer Point where the Iskemays tents is."

And on Eskimo Point stands the Company's bastioned ruin, Prince of Wales's Fort (usually called Fort Prince of Wales today) built after Captain Knight sailed north in search of gold and found death on Marble Island. Still star-shaped as in the beginning, abandoned to wind and snow, the stone fortress is now one of Canada's national historic parks.

We could see it from the rocky mound where we stood, its low walls rising over a flat stretch of land which curved around to the north of us. But closer at hand was another bit of defence machinery, one that proved equally useless, and valuable now only for its historic interest. Both points of land had been fortified. Here on Cape Merry was the battery which was meant to guard the river mouth against hostile invaders. Six 24-pounders had been set up there in the beginning. But the long years of peace lulled the traders into security on the bay. The staff was in no sense strong enough to man all the guns, and besides, they were peaceful business-men, not warriors. In time of need, the cannon on

the point, like those in the fortress across the way, remained mute. Only the crumbling powder magazine remains, and broken-down stone walls.

We studied them for a while, but soon forgot them in the clouds of mosquitoes that plagued us. With the sinking of sun and wind, these winged demons came on in their millions. And we stirred up an equal force as we walked through the grasses and flowers that matted the ground. There were as many flowers as mosquitoes, or very nearly. They were unbelievably profuse. All that we had read of the abundance of Arctic flowers suddenly came to mind, and for the first time, could be believed.

"I wish I had a botany manual," I sighed. "But probably some of these wouldn't be in it anyway. I'll take some with me, maybe someone will know about them."

"Mrs. Beckett would be sure to know. Weren't you going to call on her?" Richard reminded me.

It was the perfect solution. With our hands full of different kinds of wildflowers, we approached the door of a small frame building. A pleasant-faced woman in early middle age opened the door to us. We explained.

"Do come in," she invited, and led the way into the living room. Mr. Beckett put aside the book he was reading.

It is not odd that people beat a path to the Becketts' door, especially naturalists, or even those with my fragmentary interest in the subject. Mrs. Beckett is intensely interested in people, in natural history, in real history, swift to make her plans, and daring in carrying them out. This very Sunday, she and a group of others had been out on the Department of Transport ship. Yesterday she had found the nest of a Hudsonian godwit. She identified our flowers at once.

"These are avens . . . Grass of Parnassus . . . Hedysarum . . . Oh, I am sorry that you weren't along on the trip today!"

She told us of an excursion she made to York Factory on a little Hudson's Bay Company packet ship, which did not usually carry passengers. She and the tons of supplies were lightered ashore from the ship anchored in midstream.

Going through the two-storied Great House, she re-lived the pageantry of an earlier era when York Factory was the crossroads of the fur trade. Mrs. Beckett knew her Canadian history well enough to envision the long-ago voyageurs, bluff Scottish factors, its capture by D'Iberville after the famous Battle of the Bay.

"Then on our return, just as we were almost within sight of Churchill Harbour, fog and storm closed down on us. Instead of getting home that night, we tossed about on Hudson Bay, driven off course by a terrific 65-mile an hour gale. Every man of the crew was at his post all night long, never knowing if we'd strike a reef. The ship did everything but turn upside down, and some of the time I wished that Henry Hudson hadn't discovered the bay. But it was a marvellous experience, an opportunity I'd never get again. The crew were very proud of me—I didn't disgrace them!"

Another trip she has made was north to Southampton Island, home of the Eskimos. Few people have a greater zest for living than she, and she finds fresh wonders and delights in Churchill's flora and fauna year after year.

We inquired about the grain elevator. Could we see it?

"Sure," said Mr. Beckett. "Come over tomorrow and you can look around. And by the way, if you want a shower, just bring a towel with you." We were a bit startled. But like many a traveller before us, we accepted the invitation, for the hotel facilities were decidedly sketchy.

The big white elevator at Churchill and the docks were completed after the railway was finished. The mouth of the river forms a magnificent and natural land-locked harbour, with a depth of thirty feet of water under the keels at the dock at low tide. There is space for four ships at once alongside the dock, and three ships can be loaded with grain simultaneously, by spouts leading from the galleries. The 2,500,000 bushel elevator is of modern construction, complete with car-dumping equipment and machinery for cleaning, grading and loading wheat by a conveyor system. Immediately after the war, the Hudson Bay Route Association got busy in the interests of the port, and each year since has

seen an increase in the exports. In 1948, thirty-five vessels, fifteen of them deep-sea freighters loaded 161,576 tons of goods for overseas.

The rub is that ships have rarely carried much inbound cargo, and a two-way traffic of commodities is vital to the full use of the railway and port. The high tide of imports was reached back in 1935, with 2,580 tons of general cargo—window glass, bagged and bunker coal, china, twine It is still far from what it will yet be, but of late several shipments of English cars destined for Saskatchewan and Alberta have come in through the northern seaport.

The argument runs that Western Canada cannot offer a large enough consumer's market for such goods; that some of the cargo might be of a timely nature, such as binder twine for harvesting operations. The Association points out that the route is a short-cut not only for the Canadian west, but for the Midwestern states, and even *via* British Columbia, to the Orient. There is no question but that the route will eventually be greatly used, even if the planners seemed to have been a little impatient.

The Hudson's Bay schooner *Fort Severn* lay at anchor at the dock, and was later joined by the Peterhead boat belonging to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, which had journeyed down from Chesterfield. In discussing navigation with some of the crew, it was remarkable to realize how few disasters the Hudson Bay had to account for!

"Look at the way the *Nascopie* went up every year for thirty-four years. Yeah, she hit a rock eventually, but still, that could happen anywhere."

In navigating Hudson Strait and Bay, ships are assisted by the Canadian Government ice-breaker *J. S. McLean*, which patrols during the navigation season of August to mid-October, advising ships of weather and ice conditions. Government radio-telegraph stations, five of them equipped with direction-finding apparatus, have also been set up to assist navigation in Hudson Strait. Gyro compass and radar equipment have added greatly to the safety of the route. But think of those sailing schooners of the early days that

negotiated the straits year after year with only the tools that were available in 1670 and on!

That evening I attended the trappers' meeting in the community hall, at which they discussed the advisability of registered traplines, as against the old method of everybody running his lines wherever he could, and taking all the fur he could get. Mr. Wells, Supervisor of Registered Traplines, had discussed the preliminaries already. This was the clincher.

These quiet men with the seamed weather-beaten faces gathered in the hall with the government men, and Joe Chambers, chairman of the meeting. Joe of the snowy hair, bright blue eyes and eloquent tongue, got the meeting under way.

Harold Wells outlined some of the advantages of the registered traplines. "It means that the territory you're accustomed to working under pressure of competition will be your own to 'wild-fur-farm' to the best advantage. For instance, if you've got a beaver on that area, instead of trying to trap him ahead of the other fellow, you build dams and encourage him to raise a family. Or for a barren trapline, you arrange to get nuisance beaver to stock the territory. You know yourselves, once you get started in beaver, other fur-bearers thrive in that area."

The trappers nodded. That was right, for sure. And they exchanged whispers as to what else a fellow could do to build up his trapline. Make marshes where muskrats could find bulrushes and frogs for food. Throw rough fish on the banks of a stream to lure fox. See that there is plenty of cover for animals that might decide to den up on your trapline . . . Joe Chambers called the meeting to order. Then he asked for their vote. Overwhelmingly, they decided for registered traplines. They knew that the system had worked successfully farther south, and they favoured 'em for up here.

"You know," said "Windy" Smith, "I always hated taking all the fur I could get off my trapline. That's no way to make sure of pelts for the future. Now that nobody else but

me can trap there, I don't have to take just as much as I possibly can every season."

None of them could foresee it at that time, but those traplines were worth actual money to them. When the military zone was widened to include some of the registered traplines, the trappers received monetary compensation for their estimated losses. Otherwise they wouldn't have had a shadow of claim.

The only boundary dispute over the traplines in the Churchill area arose when David Spence, a native trapper, found three traps on his line down along the Churchill River. In the traps were three white foxes, big ones. Obviously his neighbours didn't realize they were out of bounds.

On his next visit to Churchill, David carried traps and pelts to the Mounted Police, who advised him to "hold everything. Wells was coming to town that night." Fortunately all concerned were in the village when he arrived, and a meeting was held at once.

"Tell me, David," the supervisor asked gently, "how did you know that the traps were on your trapline. It's awfully hard to distinguish boundaries in those crooked winding creeks."

"Well, I went to one kettle-boil," said David, "setting traps all the way, and that should be about five miles. Then I went on setting traps until suppertime, which should be another five miles. That way I knew they were on my trapline."

In the end, it was evident that David had somehow got over onto his neighbours' traplines, instead! Pelts and traps were handed over with grace. The boundaries were marked with spruce trees thrust into the snow along the creek. Such an episode could have ended in hard feeling or even in blows.

Another evening after a day of high winds and heavy downpour, we and the rest of the villagers piled into army trucks and went to the movies in the hall at Fort Churchill, the army camp of long grey wooden huts. Tourists, trappers,

business people and natives were packed in together like sardines, everyone laughing and excited. The movie was artificial enough anywhere, but the screams of laughter from the Indian children was the best part of it all.

Toward the end of the week, the weather seemed settled enough to permit us to cross the Churchill River to Prince of Wales' Fort. The crossing can be dangerous, in which case the trappers flatly refuse to take any passengers out in their freight canoes. And that's the only way to get there. But Thursday was a glorious day of bright sunshine, just enough wind to put a sparkle on the water, and discourage the mosquitoes.

It was historic Churchill that interested us that day, as we pushed off from Moccasin Flats on the east bank of the river across the bottle-necked harbour to the old grey fortifications of America's most northerly fortress. The engine in the freighter canoe throbbed. The huskies chained on shore set up their mournful wails, joined by a hundred answering yelps.

Now we could see the white whales closer, Moby Dick's babies cruising the river mouth. Like a loud sigh came the "whoosh" of their blowing as fountains of water spurted skywards. At a distance you might take them for a bit of floating ice, or foam. We saw many of them nearby, and were even lucky enough to see a black baby riding the shoulder of its snowy mother. On the falling tide, schools of these belugas feed on small fish in the harbour mouth, great white blimps undulating through the water. They are up to twenty feet in length, and may weigh a ton. Hunting whales is sport for tourists, but is serious business in the northern port. Even the tourists must have a permit, and guarantee not to waste the carcass. A whaling station has recently been set up in Churchill, where the oil is processed and used as edible fat. The meat is used as steaks, and as food on fur farms. The trappers use the blubber for dog feed, and our ferrymen were going hunting after they deposited us.

They let us out on the stony shore of Eskimo Point, and we moved slowly up to the ruins, now the Fort Prince of

Wales National Historic Park. The stonework has been partially restored, and some of the cannon remounted on wooden carriages. Occasional cannon balls remain, and hand-forged iron spikes may be picked up in the ruins. Rubble lies over the flat rocks that pave the courtyard. Northern wildflowers bloom in matted profusion of purple, pink, yellow and white in the crevices. Crannies in the walls provide nesting places for birds.

Work on the stone fortress commenced in 1732, and when it was partly completed, trading operations were carried on there instead of at the wooden fort which Knight had built. But they kept on working at the fort until, in 1771, they deemed it impregnable. Joseph Robson, construction boss, hadn't a good word to say about it, and said all the bad words in a book published in 1752. Naturally, it was eagerly read by the French, and filed away in the back of their minds for future reference.

Materials for the structure were close at hand. The stone in the walls and buildings came from the grey quartzite ridge less than half a mile away. Limestone and sand and wood for burning the lime were also available not too far off. The completed fort is roughly 310 feet square, with pointed bastions at each corner. The seventeen-foot walls vary in thickness from thirty-seven to forty-two feet. They were narrower than that, but the cannon ran off them when they recoiled. Forty embrasures look out over the plains and watery wastes.

Completed with buildings inside, the Governor's residence, warehouse and barracks, the fort was no longer cheerless—but it was still waterless. Water had to be fetched from a spring a couple of miles away.

Life in the fur-trading fortress still irked many a young apprentice and "servant" of the Company. Among them was Samuel Hearne, a conscientious young man of twenty-four, somewhat brow-beaten by the licentious, though efficient, Governor Moses Norton. Hearne was glad to get away from Prince of Wales' Fort in 1769, to seek the "Far-Away Metal River," where the Indians got their copper.

After two unsuccessful departures from the fort, Hearne at length reached the Coppermine River, thanks to a remarkable Chipewyan chief, Matonabbee. But the river was a disappointment, for there was no gold, and the copper not worth the trouble. Still his toilsome journey helped to unroll the map of Northern Canada, and is still considered a miracle of endurance.

By 1775, Samuel Hearne replaced the deceased Norton as Governor, and took fifteen-year-old Mary Norton — quite unlike her father — as his "country wife." The next seven years were surely the happiest in the history of the fort. Each year, Hearne renewed his friendship with Matonabbee, when he came to trade. The gentle Mary was "a pleasing friend and faithful wife." He had time to work on the journal of his explorations. He made notes on the natural history of the country, and he kept pets of various birds and animals, including the beaver. They were probably his favourites.

I kept several . . . till they became so domesticated as to answer to their names . . . and follow as a dog would do; and they were as pleased at being fondled as any animal I ever saw. I had a house built for them, a small piece of water before the house into which they always plunged when they wanted to relieve nature . . . so they made not the least dirt, though they were kept in my own sitting room. In general during the winter, they lived on the same food as the women did, and were remarkably fond of rice and plum pudding.

We perched on the stone parapets, and gazed out over the broad expanses of Hudson Bay, just as Hearne must have done many a time. Peevish terns wheeled and mewed overhead. The grasses around the fort rippled in the ceaseless wind. It would have been perfectly in keeping had a tall man-o'-war hove over the horizon as it did long ago.

For the French did come.

In 1782, Admiral la Pérouse came sailing into the harbour with three war vessels, landed his four hundred men, and demanded surrender.

Inside the fort, Samuel Hearne studied the situation. The cannon had never been used except to fire salutes. He had only thirty-nine men all told, and some of them were away shooting ducks for the winter larder. A siege was out of the question, with the water supply two miles away. He did the prudent thing—he ran up a white flag of surrender. It probably surprised the Admiral no end, though he knew the condition of the fortress undoubtedly. Still, his own men were poorly clad, and weary after a long sea voyage. The thing might have turned out differently, if Hearne had made a show of resistance. But in the opinion of the Hudson's Bay Company, he had acted wisely. The company could claim in all honesty that it had been an attack on civilians . . . and collect damages in full.

The French sacked and burned the buildings, carried off all they could, including Hearne's journal, and all the men as prisoners. They attempted to blow up the fort without much success, and the walls are still as the French left them. Then they sailed away to take York Factory, which also fell like a ripe plum.

By the fortunes of war, peace was signed the following year, and Hearne returned to take charge at Churchill, and build a new wooden post on the former site. But Hearne never again knew happiness at Churchill. Mary Norton's relatives had callously let her starve to death, a tremendous blow to her husband. His pets were gone. Matonabee had hanged himself in shame over his friend's defeat. Saddened and in ill health, he was probably more testy than was his custom. At least the fifteen-year-old apprentice, David Thompson, went out of his way to criticize him.

"On my complaining that I would lose my writing for want of practice, Mr. Hearne employed me a few days on his manuscript." The apprentice may have gotten his first enthusiasm for geography from that bit of work. Hearne remained at Fort Churchill until 1787, when he retired to England.

He left his signature on the rocks at Sloops' Cove. Picking our way down the footpath that winds around the corners

where the storehouses once were, we stepped through the rubble, out through the restored gateway. Sloops' Cove lies a mile farther up river from the old fort, and we made our way along the shore, leaping from stone to stone over the tide pools. Finally we came to the tiny secluded bay, where early explorers and men in the service of the company had wintered their sailing vessels.

Sloops' Cove, a mere break in the western shoreline of the river, is formed by smooth rocky ridges. A short stone dyke was added to prevent ice-cakes from piling into the cove during spring break-up. Hawsers looped through great iron ringbolts drew the vessels ashore and moored them snugly. Today, the rings had another use, far from nautical. Aloof Chipewyan Indians who were camping in the lee of the rocks had chained their dogs to the rusty ringbolts. Husky howling, that serenade of the north, mingled with the splash of waves and the constant twittering of birds.

Names chiselled into the rocks in antiquated lettering have withstood more than two centuries of weathering. Names of sloops and their crews, initials and dates, sometimes a stonemason's mark, such as hammer or hatchet appear there. One of an old-time gibbet depicts the story of a man hanged for stealing a goose, and gives rise to all kinds of speculations. Was it a memorial to some unfortunate friend back in England? Two ships' names are *Discovery* and *Furnace*, ships of the Dobbs Expedition of 1741. Dobbs was determined to discredit the Hudson's Bay Company, by prodding the Admiralty into finding the Northwest Passage. The ships wintered here near the fort, with cordial though formal relations between the sailors and the fur traders. The most famous signature was pecked into the rock on a July day, exactly one hundred years before Confederation. It is "Sl Hearne. July ye 1, 1767:"

To that bleak cove one chilly day in late summer of 1813 came a party of plague-stricken, sea-weary immigrants. This group, the third party of Selkirk settlers, was hustled off ship here instead of at York Factory. The captain protested that he was short of crew, that the season was late,

that his ship needed repairs. In fact, he was determined to be rid of the colonists and their ship's fever. The factor at the trading post was no more hospitable, and the settlers had a grim time of it. After a few weeks at Sloops' Cove, where many became ill again and some died, they moved fifteen miles south to the edge of the tree-line across the muskeg to what they called Colony Creek. They were in no mood to leave their autographs on the rocks, though some left their bones there.

At the creek, they put in the wretched winter as best they could, and then started the hundred-and-fifty mile march south to York Factory. It was a gruelling experience. A baby was born in a little tent amid the April snows, but the parents caught up with the column the next day. It took them three months to cover the 815 miles from Churchill to the Selkirk Settlements on the Red River.

But we heard the throb of the freighter canoe returning to the fort, a sound which started up the husky cries once more. We hurried back across the rocks to the rendezvous, took our places in the canoe, and shuttled back across the river mouth toward the village of Churchill.

The R.C.M.P. Peterhead boat, expected from Chesterfield Inlet, which was to carry the McLaughlins to Baker Lake for a three-year stretch, was at the dock when we returned. That evening, in response to an invitation, we sallied up to the barracks. In the long summer twilight, we chatted on the bit of grass enclosed by whitewashed stones, and slapped at mosquitoes.

"We hear you have the nest of a horned lark here in the grass somewhere," I said to Constable Dick Thomas, who was at Churchill taking census of the Chipewyan Indians.

"We have a nest—but we can't guarantee what's in it," he replied. "Right around here somewhere. But you have to look close to find it." He searched around, as we all did, and sure enough we saw the tiny brownish bird with the two tufts of feathers upstanding on her head. She flew away as we approached. There were young in her nest, so we didn't go too close nor stay too long.

It was like old home week to the Mounties. Corey and Auchterlonie had come in from Chesterfield. Two more were on duty at Churchill. McLaughlin was going to Baker Lake, Dick Thomas was up from Dauphin. Talk ranged all over the Arctic and back again, for most of them had had Arctic experience. Refreshments were simply tea made in the deep heart of the Quebec heater in a precarious fashion. There were only two cups and two glasses to be found, it seemed, and these were used, turned in, refilled and passed on to the next. Sunrise was staining the sky when we left. And I don't infer that we overstayed. It was only eleven o'clock. The sun was just setting in the west, while already the rosy tints of sunrise showed in the east. Actually there was not any real darkness at that time of year.

Even so, we had seen the Northern Lights a few nights before, said to be at their best in that latitude, not farther north as one might expect. Captain Knight recorded in his journal, "An abundance of Petty Dancers appear'd in thee sky Last Night & was wonderous bright."

Great changeability marked the weather all the time we were in Churchill, but the next day was the height. At times it blew hard, then dropped suddenly and completely. Sometimes I needed my heavy coat, other times wondered why I had lugged it along. With a couple of other tourists, I jaunted up to the elevator to look at the boats in from the north. A couple of Eskimo boatmen from Chesterfield Inlet were loading supplies into the Peterhead boat, readying her for the return trip. To my disappointment they were not fully clad in two suits of fur (though I didn't really expect it) but in sensible blue dungarees and leather jackets.

"Oh, we won't be pulling out until tomorrow," said Captain Barbour of the *Fort Severn*, in answer to our questions. "Barometer's dropping fast."

Richard was missing when we returned to the hotel, but I supposed him to be taking photographs somewhere around the village. Until he failed to show up for lunch. Then I began to suspect he had gone white whale hunting with the trappers. As we left the Beanery, a huge black

cloud rolled up in the north, and rain hissed out of it just as we reached the hotel. Finding it hard to concentrate on anything else, we watched the storm from the hotel windows. The wind struck the water, lifting it up into the air, a fair-sized waterspout. Behind the waterspout which twisted upstream, the wind raced directly across the river from Eskimo Point, lashing the river into foamy whitecaps, fascinating and dreadful to see. I hoped we were wrong about the whaling, for no small boat could live in such a storm.

Then the wind struck the building, and the rain drummed down in great drops, as if the heavens were opened. Nothing of the far shore could be seen in the wall of water. But it was only a squall. We even had a beautiful sunset by suppertime.

And with suppertime, the bedraggled whalers came home. Henry Johnson and Carl Buckholz had gone out to get whalemeat for their huskies, and Richard had gone along for photographs. They cruised along quietly until they sighted a whale coming up to blow, then hurried after it.

"Henry crowded him up into relatively shallow water, so he couldn't dive out of sight. Then when he came up to blow, Carl drove the harpoon deep into him — didn't throw it, but drove it downward from where he was standing in the bow of the canoe. The whale started ahead very swiftly, and the boat was going faster than the motor could make it. Funny sensation. Then after a few minutes, Carl threw out the drum attached to the harpoon line, and we watched it dodging back and forth across the water pulled by the whale. It just serves to make the location of the animal, doesn't keep it from sinking."

"Well, but didn't you see the storm coming up?"

"Oh sure. But you couldn't think of anything else while chasing the whale! Then the storm struck suddenly — well, you saw how it went. That waterspout must have been a hundred feet high. We were just flung around like chips for awhile, lying flat in the bottom of the boat. Everything

was awash of course, and everything but the cameras got wet. I was huddled over them."

The storm threw the boat into a shallow weedy growth of bulrushes, where the force of wind and wave was broken a little. So they rode out the storm, with the clouds deluging them. Only after the storm was spent did they dare to start for home. The trip was not in vain, however. For they got their whale. It had not gone very far away, and the drum marked its location. As it rose to blow, Carl put a bullet through its head, and they towed it ashore.

They were on the shore now, carving up the carcass. They had beached it far up on the high tide, and secured it with ropes so that the next high tide would not carry it away again. Now they were cutting it into strips for dog feed. There was a film covering the whole whale which could be peeled off like cellophane. Below that was the tough hide, about half an inch thick, above three inches of oily yellow blubber which was so soft that it would melt in ordinary sunlight.

Carl and Henry worked quickly, cutting the blubber into strips which they piled into a large drum, where it would render itself. It made excellent dog feed. They also got the meat, but the intestines were left for the gulls and flies. I'd often read of the smell of cutting up whale meat. It's just as malodorous as I could have imagined.

But the huskies went wild as the pungent odour reached their nostrils. They jumped at the end of their chains, howled most dismally. When Carl eventually went to feed his animals their one meal of the day, a chorus started up all along the beach where other trappers had staked out their animals. The chorus rose and fell, answering howls coming from other huskies over on the bay side of the point. Then suddenly, silence fell, a boon to the ears.

We had thought we were a long way north at Churchill, but it was just the jumping off place to Mounties and missionaries and prospectors and fur traders fanning out to the subarctic and Arctic. We felt a little disconsolate, and very "touristy" when we gathered on the railway station the next morning on our way back "Outside."

11

Caravan of the Snows

Ilford — God's Lake — Red Sucker — Island Lake

IT WAS FEBRUARY of the following winter when we next went north. From Winnipeg's snowy streets, we headed out across the flat plains swept with winds from the Arctic. Drifts piled up on either side of the railway, here and there blocked by snow-fences of sturdy design. Now more than in summer, the homesteads looked tiny and shrunken against the snowy vastness of the prairies. At stations we caught sight of the school cabooses, with their little stovepipes smoking cheerfully. Daylight waned as we passed Riding and Duck Mountains, and by Dauphin, darkness lay over the whole country.

By morning we had reached The Pas. To me, the sun seemed to be rising in the wrong place, until I remembered that the train curved into Saskatchewan, to Hudson Bay Junction. This day, we actually did have time to spare, to look around The Pas, to watch the youngsters with their sled dogs, to step out briskly along the main street in dazzling sunlight which only faintly mitigated the low temperatures. We marvelled at the huge furs which the men wore around their parka hoods—a whole red fox pelt was nothing unusual. And they needed them against the biting winds.

In the afternoon, I dropped in at the *Northern Mail* offices to chat with editor Bob Taylor. He knows practically

everything that happens in northern Manitoba. Nothing newsworthy or strange misses his nimble typewriter. All the stories of the north seem to find their way to his office.

"Going north to see some tractor freighting, eh? Well, that country's simply crawling with caterpillars." Seeing the disbelief in my face, he added quickly, "Caterpillar tractors, that is."

From point after point on the Hudson Bay Railway, tractor trains fetch and carry, the vital life-lines of equipment and supplies for trading posts, missions and mining developments. Under the flickering weaving Northern Lights, "cat swings" pull out on their broad treads, rattling over frozen lakes and bumpy portage trails, through blizzards, slush and temperatures far below zero.

"Yes, Ilford's a good place. But you'll see lots of it as you go north. In fact," he pointed out the window, "there's a swing just in from Cumberland House."

This tractor train was hauling in loads of pulpwood to be shipped south. But often enough the swings carrying in supplies of mining machinery come back empty, and even so the one-way freighting is profitable. Frequently there's a return payload of frozen fish, pulpwood, mineral concentrates or bundles of fur.

Ilford had looked sleepy when we went through in the summer, and was. Summertime is playtime. In winter, the real work of the village is under way. We arrived very early on a dark winter morning, on the fast train from The Pas, and groped our way to the hotel where a faint light glowed.

A blaze of lights in the freighting yards lay off to one side. The frosty stars, larger and more brilliant than usual, seemed close enough to touch. The air throbbed with the steady muffled beat of the tractor engines. Up there in the north during freighting operations, the engines of the great "cats" are never shut off. They pound or hum, idling while the freight is being loaded onto the string of sleighs. From the beginning of freighting operations in mid-December until spring break-up in April, the tractors throb out their powerful

heartbeats. The bright lights of the machines played over the piles of goods stacked in the freighting yard.

In the morning, we strolled around the village, and along the snowy paths to the Indian settlement of shack and huts. Here an old woman clad in full skirts, moccasins and with a large plaid shawl over head and shoulders, was scraping at a large moose-hide on a stretcher. Youngsters played with husky puppies. Small boys wrestled in the snow.

Back at the freight yards, we watched the men clad in heavy parkas as they loaded the sleighs. A pleasant-face young man who turned out to be "Mannie" (T. J.) Johnson showed us around, then invited us over to the office to meet his father, "Hi" Johnson, owner of the largest privately-owned outfit in the Province.

"If you want to really learn anything about tractor swings, you ought to make a trip with one," said Hi. "We're starting out tomorrow on a run of about ten days. You could bunk with my daughter Ann."

Thus, simply, it was arranged, the thing I'd hardly dared to hope for, the sort of thing that couldn't be arranged ahead of time. For tractor freighting can rarely be scheduled, as I learned for myself. On some short runs, the tractors can keep to a time-table, but not on long ones such as these. Most tractor swings are exclusively masculine, with distinctly no place for a woman, even a woman cook. But Ann Johnson, a friendly capable girl of twenty-one was cooking for this outfit. She was glad to have feminine company, and I liked her from the first.

The tiny bedroom was so small you "couldn't swing a cat in it." Our personal belongings were laughably sketchy. Ann and I shared that cubicle with tins of dehydrated potatoes, with axes and ice-chisels, a tool-kit and a hundred other ill-assorted items. Even though we were desperately crowded, it was always good for a laugh. Despite differences in age, ability and temperament, Ann and I teamed up well in the close confines of the caboose. It was a good thing, for our estimated ten days turned into thirty.

I moved in that afternoon. Richard bunked in the "sleep caboose" taking any bunk not in use at the moment, even though it meant changing bunks at four o'clock when the shift changed. He accompanied the swing as far as God's Lake, then hitched a ride back to Ilford on another outfit to continue north to Churchill and Duck Lake.

Before tucking in under the down sleeping robe with Ann, I peered out the back of the caboose. The Northern Lights were low and lovely, emerald green, wheeling across the sky. After very short chatter, Ann and I were sleeping. At three o'clock we awakened to overhear Jackie Johnson stamp off the snow as he mounted the steps into the cook caboose and report wearily, "Well, that tractor won't be ready for the trip without some repairs. Take several hours." Ann was up like a flash to get some food for the mechanic and his crew. I stayed where I was until she got up for the second time at 6.30 in the morning.

Loading was finished the next day. Mannie checked off freight lists, as barrels of fuel oil were rolled and hoisted by man power onto the flat sleighs. Drums of kerosene and gasoline stood piled in readiness for the push-off. Dressed lumber towered on one of the rack sleighs, destined for new trading posts. Bags of flour and of sugar were arranged so that they could not slide off on the rough journey ahead.

Package goods comprising syrup and snuff, chocolate bars and cigarettes, loud plaid windbreakers and woollen socks, drums of powdered milk and baking powder completed a load of thirty sleighs and of slightly more than three hundred tons of freight. The loads were geared to the strength of each machine, lighter loads for the D4's, heavier for the greater hauling capacity of the larger D6's.

Three cabooses were strung in line—cook caboose in which Ann and I lived and worked—sleep caboose where bunks were arranged against the walls for the men off duty—and a third which was a combination of both. The latter was extremely useful for smaller crews of men sent on "flying trips" to pick up fish or deliver small loads of freight.

At the last moment, word came that one of the Indian

brakemen felt "too sick" to make the trip. It is an alibi for almost anything an Indian does not want to do, whatever the real reason. Hi was annoyed, understandably.

"We've got to have a brakeman. Have to take your bull cook, Ann."

Ann's quick temper flared. "And who's going to help me in the cook caboose—see that the fires are on, the potatoes peeled, the kettle filled? I can't do everything." This was obviously my chance to show my appreciation. And so I offered my limited services for the job, the more pleased not to be dead-weight on the trip. There just isn't room on a tractor swing for non-essentials, and I was lucky to get the chance to go along.

The 125 miles from Ilford to God's Lake practically forms a tractor highroad, being used by at least four different outfits. Sixty hours is standard time for the trip in from the railway, an uphill grade most of the way. But the drivers shift into "big wheel" for the return trip, and make it in forty-eight hours, barring accidents.

From God's Lake, the tractor swings may branch off to mining communities such as Lingman Lake, or to the trading posts of Red Sucker and Island Lake. Or the swing may have occasion to take the long trail into Ontario, to Sachigo, Trout or Bearskin Lakes. "The Bearskin Special," one of the longest swings in the country means a round trip of nearly a thousand lonesome miles. We were transporting supplies for several posts. Some were to be cached at Red Sucker, and taken in to Bearskin and Island Lakes on the next trip. Part of the crew was to take one snowplow and the small caboose to break out the road to Bearskin, while the rest of the swing turned back at Red Sucker Lake. That was the plan as we left Ilford.

The sun was sinking, golden behind the pointed black spruce trees when the tractor swing wheeled out of the freight yard. One after another, the big "cats" with their load behind them swung into position, pulling away in carefully pre-arranged order, across the Hudson Bay Railway

tracks, and up onto the bumpy road which led to God's Lake. Our caravan of the snows was on its way.

Out along the narrow road, the tractors wound upgrade at a slow pace of three miles an hour. It was a fascinating sight as they took the curves one after another, the headlights glancing over the snowy evergreens, highlighting the track of the sleigh runners ahead of them. Ten pairs of lights flickered and wavered as the tractors lurched into pitch-holes on the road, and climbed back out again. Magical and unreal, the headlights seemed to search their own way around the curves of the road, like robots.

That travelled road seems like a fine highway to the catskinners themselves. But it's rough enough back in the caboose, and especially to a rookie. I began to experience heaving sensations just where I had put Ann's good dinner. My expression betrayed me.

"Not getting seasick, are you?" she asked solicitously. Then, "We had an Indian brakeman last trip who got seasick every time he set foot in the caboose. He wound up by walking nearly the whole sixty miles to Oxford House."

I sympathized deeply with him. But it put me on my mettle, and besides walking didn't appeal to me in such quantities. Instead, Ann and I hurried through with the dishes, slicked up the caboose. Ann climbed up to the roof of the caboose to throw down loaves of frozen bread, so they could thaw out by morning. Frozen roasts came in from the meatbox to thaw out within the next few days. Sometimes they had to be put in the oven when still frozen in the centre. And it was common practice to return a roast to the oven, so that the centre would cook for the next meal.

The cook caboose was like a large wooden shoe-box set on dipping swaying sleigh runners. It was particularly well-equipped with a railing around the top of the stove, lips on every shelf, cupboard doors that buttoned shut, and furniture that was entirely built-in, even to stove, galvanized water-tanks and sink, table and seat which doubled as vegetable bins. It was something like the cabin on a ship. The bed-

room section at the end opposite the entrance was just large enough for a double bed, and space to get into it.

Nautical terms came readily to my mind in connection with tractor freighting, although the atmosphere is rather a composite of the merchant marine and the lumber camp. The sleighs and cabooses pitched and lurched and listed as if in the grip of a restless cross-current. There was plenty of stress and strain on the timbers of the caboose. I'd feel the walls stretching and heaving as I leaned against them at times. We climbed the sloping and slippery deck, I mean floor, often icy with spilled water or moisture from the men's boots. We flung ourselves toward the stove in an effort to keep the coffee-pot from taking a header overboard, or rescue plates that were sliding off the table to starboard. We developed a seaman's stance, standing astride while cooking or drying dishes, braced against the uncertain jerking and tossing of the tractor swing.

"Just exactly what is a swing?" I asked after hearing the term used in several ways.

"Well, it can mean different things," Hi told me. "It could mean the tractor and the group of sleighs it's pulling. Or it could mean the whole outfit, all the tractors and all the sleighs. Or it can mean the route of the tractor transport.

The little red caboose, the third in the lineup, was regulation of most swings, but Hi Johnson, had arranged things differently. Most of the cabooses are "muzzle-loaders"—one end solid with bunks, like a honeycomb, and "you climb in from the muzzle." The other half of the caboose is cooking, eating and lounging territory. Our outfit had earned the name "the Pullman swing" or the "Gentlemen Freighters." If this was luxury, then life must be pretty grim on the other tractor trains, I thought.

"Oh, it's a lot better than it used to be," said Hi. "I mind back in 1914, I started freighting out from The Pas to Brochet and Pukitiwagan, sometimes took thirty-five to forty days for a trip. Everything was freighted in by horses them days, and I bet plenty of times I carried more feed than freight. We'd tie the horses to spruce trees, and sleep

in our blankets around a campfire. Sometimes the exposure would be too much for the animals, and they'd die on the road. Had to walk home more than once." His shoulder twitched in a characteristic mannerism. "We never even thought of a cook caboose then. Just cooked our bannock and beans and tea over a fire."

It's still no life of ease. Catskinners usually work eight-hour stretches, eight on, eight off, eight on again. Twenty drivers therefore were needed for Hi's ten machines, and a couple of brakemen. We worked hard too in the cook caboose, but our hours were not so regular as the men's. I was ready to drop at 9.30 at night, never having worked so hard in my life. But what I did was nothing compared with Ann. She was a tower of strength, a whirlwind in execution, and amazingly skilled in cookery. She was tall and strong, and needed to be.

We were both glad to tuck in early at night, since we had to be up again around three to get breakfast. Snuggled beneath a cosy sleeping robe, we listened drowsily to the squeak of runners over dry snow, the groaning of caboose timbers, the symphony of kitchen sounds. Soon, though, we were oblivious of the clashing of the iron grid against the frying-pans, the higher *obbligato* of the pokers and toasters, the sloshing of water in the tanks, the slither of the tea-kettle across the stove. Nothing could be more appealing than our pillows, heave though they might with the movements of the caboose. Funny, but you got to enjoy that pitching after a time.

In the limited space of the cook caboose, we served over two thousand meals and innumerable lunches to the crew of twenty-five, including ourselves. The days became very confused, for each day we seemed to live twice.

We got up twice, once for the early breakfast of two sittings for the men around 3.30 in the morning, then later around eight o'clock for our own breakfast. Dinner at noon meant twenty-three men again had to be fed in two sittings. Cook and bull-cook made a third sitting—if we had any appetite left by that time. Frequently we had grown utterly

disinterested in food by the time the table was cleared, the dishes and pots and pans washed. Supper, which was really another dinner, came at eight o'clock at night, when the shift changed after an eight-hour stretch. At each four-hour interval, the men who were on duty dropped in for a ten-minute break with coffee and doughnuts or sandwiches.

The breakfast table, and all the others, had to be set "on the fly," while the tractor train was lurching along. It was no trifling task to keep twelve plates from sliding off the table onto the floor, while I was busy refilling maple syrup pitchers, or mixing powdered milk. I practically spread-eagled myself across that table as the plates slid off with a lurch and rattle of cutlery, fortunately onto the padded seat.

As fast as the men finished with their plates, they handed them down the table to me. I washed them as quickly as I could—and how my speed improved!—in water that soon became cold and greasy. Ann continued to fry up stacks of light-weight, yellow-brown pancakes, which vanished with appalling celerity. The caravan halted for the second sitting, while the drivers came in to eat, and the men going on shift re-fueled the machines. The drivers then rolled into bunks that were scarcely cooled off from their previous occupants. We hastily finished up the dishes, made sandwiches for the next lunch, and went back to bed. After all other meals, we immediately set to work preparing for the next. My fingers soon began to feel the size of carrots from the unaccustomed work.

Time after time, the rough roads meant sudden death to a chocolate cake or to the dessert. One day, when the kitchen door was open for coolness, Ann opened the oven door to baste a roast of beef. A sudden lurch as the driver changed gears three sleighs ahead, hurled the roast out on the floor. Before she could rescue it, another jerk sent it flying out the open door onto the road. The treads of the tractor following close behind ground it into hamburger.

The tractor trains take some terrific lurches, but rarely does a cook caboose roll over. Sleep-caboosees tip more easily

as Ann discovered during her tractor-driving days. "Was I unpopular! The boys were flung out of their bunks clear across the caboose into the opposite bunks. Luckily no one was hurt. Not even me."

The cook caboose is much more weighty, about ten tons. One night the shift boss roused Ann and me from our slumbers. "You girls better get up and walk. We're crossing a real bad slush-hole. Don't want you in the caboose if it goes over."

At the moment we thought it a cruel waste of time when we might be sleeping. But the thought of the stove right at the doorway convinced us. The caboose could become a dangerous prison. The temperature of thirty below wakened us smartly, as we picked our way around the slush, with the Northern Lights hanging low like a banner of smoke just over our heads. Some of the loads had already been winched across by the cable fastened to one of the powerful tractors. "Frenchy" and Steve might almost have been Volga boatmen, tugging the heavy cable over their shoulder to attach it to the next load. In the darkness off to one side, a welding torch flared, where Jack Johnson was replacing the tread on a machine that had "jumped its track."

Rarely was the road in a straight line, even on lakes. It looked like a great snake as the trail wove in and out around danger spots. When the slush crept up over our road, a snaky line of brown icy water ran in rivulets behind and in front of us. But beneath that lane of slush water was the solid blue ice, except where air-holes cropped up here and there.

The route had to be chosen with care. The catskinner out on the lead machine with the snowplow had a hazardous occupation. Since the best time can be made across flat frozen surfaces, the tractor route makes use of lakes as much as possible. But the driver must proceed cautiously, must be able to recognize an air-hole long before he reaches it, must know when a slight crack in the snow means a break in the ice beneath.

The most difficult part of our journey lay through a

series of small lakes and rivers, rough portage trails and muskeg. These small lakes are not satisfactory for freighting, since they freeze early and hold the snow before they get a solid surface of good ice. The snow acts as insulation, preventing the water from freezing to a good depth. Slush ice is the result, and freighting is a nightmare.

We picked up an Indian driver at God's Lake, but the slush on some of the lakes between there and Red Sucker Lake proved too much for his nerve. After several bad lurches into slush-holes, he declined to drive any longer. "Sick heart," he explained.

It is no sign of weakness when the driver of the snowplow stands up at the controls of his machines, ready to leap for safety. When a tractor drops through the ice, it means just that. There's no margin for safety. Hi's one cab-machine, "the powerhouse," was shunned by the men in spite of its additional comfort. Whoever had to drive it, did so with the top folded back for a ready exit.

I rode in it one afternoon with Marcel, a Dutch-Canadian lad of twenty. He knew what it was to drive in blizzards. "Last year I was in the lead-machine crossing God's Lake in a blizzard," he shouted above the noise of the tractor. "Got all mixed up, but I didn't know it. Cripes, when they stopped me, I was heading straight for the mouth of the river. Ice there wouldn't hold nothing."

Ann, the "blonde catskinner" occasionally took a turn at the controls, just to keep in practice. But she was not allowed to drive, nor I to ride, in the machines when crossing bad lakes. The caboose in spite of its weight, was considered too buoyant to sink. And remembering the previous trip, neither of us care to take a chance on going through the ice. That trip had been "a heller," Ann told me.

At one of the mud-hole lakes, some of the machines and loads got across, leaving wide spaces between each swing for safety's sake. Mannie, a most dependable driver, was hauling several sleighs and the cook caboose. Suddenly, there just wasn't any ice below him. He managed to shut off the engine (most essential in order to salvage it) and escape to the

surface, but underneath the ice near the hole. He lay on top of the water, breathing the little bit of air underneath the ice. With great presence of mind, he looked for the open water where the tractor had plunged through. The moonlight striking down through the hole guided him and helping hands hauled him out.

The sleighs were sunk deep, their cargoes of sugar and flour a total loss. The cook caboose was hauled partway in, and flooded to about half its depth. Ann had had to get out of it as best she could, soaking wet in zero weather. The next day the temperature fell to forty below, while the men were working on the ice trying to raise the sunken "cat". In the process Mannie once more crashed through the ice with a tractor. Both machines were salvaged. But not all drivers are so lucky as to emerge from the icy trap of death.

Accidents and near-accidents are commonplace on tractor swings. Our medical kit came into good use practically every day. It might be a tooth broken off by the lurch of a tractor; a case of eczema aggravated by grease and fuel oil. There were several attacks of flu, sore throats, and one serious case of blood poisoning. The tractor swing is no place to be ill. There's little comfort to be had, scant attention and no hospital hush. You've just got to be rugged.

At Red Sucker Lake, where Hi had planned to deposit goods, and turn back, making a round trip of 370 miles, his plans had to be changed. The "breaking trip" to Bearskin Lake had to be abandoned, due to the slush conditions which made it impossible to move through the country speedily. The freight for Island Lake had to be taken through right now, if ever. We had already lost considerable time through breakdowns and slush.

"Never saw a worse winter in my life for freighting," Hi complained bitterly. "The snow came so early that the lakes haven't had a chance to make good strong ice. What I wouldn't give for a real hard cold snap!"

Beyond the Hudson's Bay post at Red Sucker Lake lay the stretch of lakes and portages leading to Island Lake, sixty miles south-east. The slush was particularly bad on these lakes, so much that some days we crossed only a single lake, perhaps a mile wide. Without mirth, we dubbed ourselves the "lake-a-day freighters." We had to cut a road around one of them. Snowplow and caterpillar went into action, slashing down pole-like timber, filling the air with the tang of bruised evergreens. Hi Johnson watched the "cat," as it moved down the road he had slashed. He frowned as the muskeg rose and fell with the passing weight. He had just about decided to take the chance anyway, when Harry Simitoski leaned forward on his axe handle. There was a look of astonishment on his face, as it sank down into the muskeg right to the head, and a rank odour arose.

"That settles it. Slush or no slush, we'll try the lake," Hi decided grimly. Then he explained to me, "That muskeg might have taken a few loads, but the last ones would have sunk. There's lots of tractors in the muskeg. You go down slower than through the ice, but you lose the tractor, that's for sure."

The slush *was* bad. Soft weather and the tractor treads made it that much worse. The under-surface of blue ice sinks beneath the continued weight, and every on-coming tractor finds more water and slush piled up in front of him. I saw it fully five feet deep against the radiators and water flooding into the cab. On one lake, I started to climb up on top of the cook caboose to watch our progress across the lake. But the driver of the tractor behind made frantic signs for me to stay down. It puzzled me, for we often sat up there in mild weather.

Less than a minute later, I understood. He had warned me of the slush-hole ahead. A sudden pitch to starboard hurled a pitcher of milk over onto the seat. The caboose righted itself, only to lurch to port. Things really broke loose then. Jam tins were thrown from their rack, rolling over on the floor and breaking open to mingle stickily in a sodden mass with flour and powdered milk and broken glass

and dried beans and sundry other ingredients. The stove door flew open, and embers rolled out onto the floor, but were immediately extinguished by water that had slopped over from the tank.

A rough portage road led to Island Lake with its nearly three thousand beautiful lonely islands. Ann and I perched on the roof of the caboose, yodelling sea-chanties at the top of our lungs. It didn't matter that we went off key — no one could hear us over the noise of the tractors. We could hardly hear ourselves.

The freighting season was already well-advanced, for it was the middle of March, and spring was on its way. We could tell by the wine-red of the osiers, the swelling buds of the birches, the yellow in the tamaracks. The Chinook wind had cut away the snowdrifts, leaving hollows around the bole of every tree. In the softened snow were the neat patterns of the ptarmigan, as regular as if made with a mechanical roller. Rabbit tracks appeared in abundance. After leaving Knee Lake where we saw several groups of caribou, we saw no more of them. They had migrated north on our return trip.

We stayed that night on the portage, waiting for daylight to show us a safe route through the channels ahead. One of the boys had brought along a battery radio in the red caboose, and it made good entertainment until the announcer's dulcet tones declared, "Well, folks, Spring is just around the corner. Any day now you'll see the red and yellow tractors tearing up the brown earth . . ."

Hi's poker face twitched at this. "Shut the damned thing off!" he snapped, and stalked out of the caboose. Spring was the last thing he wanted then.

We started early the next morning, and made good time, all things considered. Lunch came when we reached the deserted gold mine, in front of which is a tractor swing loaded with gold concentrates — in a hundred and fifty feet of water. Then on again, approaching the Hudson's Bay post at Garden Hill from the rear, for the ice was not firm

enough out in front. The cabooses stayed there, but the sleighs went on up over the hill to the trading post.

Ann and I walked the mile to the post. The Garden Hill post was a large and important one, with many buildings, all extremely well-kept. The post looked as good to us as if we had never seen a store before. We were nearly dazzled. For by this time, in the minor disasters and the numerous delays to which we had been subjected, our supplies had dwindled badly. The meals came to lack variety, and by now I knew most of the secrets of the boiled bean, more than a little about salt pork, and boiled fish, and too much about moosemeat. Our supplies, geared for ten days, had stretched to the point of rationing out butter and meat. Potatoes had been finished long since, as well as canned vegetables and dried apples. Here we were able to re-stock our empty larder to some extent.

The men worked as fast as they could to unload the freight for the post, for the missions, for the Department of Indian Affairs. As the freight was unloaded, the empty sleighs were "double-decked" (one loaded onto a second) to reduce the drag. A final-drive bearing went in one of the machines, and that tractor, too, went aboard a sleigh.

At the caboose, visitors dropped in for social chats. Mr. Alex Stevenson of the Department of Indian Affairs. Two Oblate missionaries who presented a rather strange appearance with parkas over their cassocks, beaded moccasins on feet, and their robes flapping in the wind as they rode behind the dog-sled. It was extremely pleasant to see new faces, talk with different people.

But we didn't linger. One of the drivers took the small caboose to pick up a load of frozen pickerel to carry back to steel. And then we were homeward bound. Ironically, the weather tightened up on the return trip, so that the going was faster, if not smoother. On the home trail we met other freighting outfits at various points along the trail. For all the rivalry between the outfits, a rough courtesy of the road prevails. When two swings meet on a portage, the more lightly loaded gives way to the heavier load. But the tractors

are uncoupled from the latter to help break out a road for the obliging driver, and help him get his loads across and out of the way. It's only commonsense, of course, but still . . .

News and messages are exchanged, advice as to conditions ahead on the road. "Watch for the cracks in God's Lake," we were warned. And we had set up crossed evergreen trees as a warning not to use several dangerous routes behind us. Other courtesies were in evidence. "Short of fuel?" "Sure, I can let you have five barrels." "Good, and you can pick up five from my cache."

Fun and humour are in short supply on the tractor swings, with so little time off for play, and relatively little comfort. But at Red Sucker post, unloading the freight had to wait until daylight. Someone got wind of a "squaw hop" in one of the Indian cabins. Four of us decided to go. We trudged across a trail we could not see, only feel with our feet, guided by the odd bit of evergreen thrust into the snow. After a mile, we reached the little shanty of poles plastered with mud. We ducked through a tiny doorway into the lamp-lit room.

"Ladies to the right, gents to the left" seemed to be the rule. The ladies were from a few months old to an age of deep wrinkles, but few of the glamour age. Several of the Indians from our outfit were there already—gay young blades, we discovered. The Councillor welcomed us, and we ranged ourselves on the floor too.

To the music of a guitar and violin, impassive Cree youngsters stamped out the beat in moccasins and rubbers, and finally the Councillor called for partners. Our partners were the Indian lads from the tractor swing, light-footed as cats even in big boots. They used a sort of double-shuffle in the square dance and the pace was fast and furious. I noticed that the Indian girls got shoved around like so many sacks of shavings. Without a sign of emotion of any kind, the dead-pan Indians kept on stamping, while the white visitors got entangled in the intricacies of "Dip and dive with the ocean wave, outside under, inside over . . .". The caller

knew not a word of English except the square dance calls, I learned later. He could have been clearer on them, too.

But we felt we dampened the party, for Indians chatter and laugh amongst themselves, assuming stolidity for the benefit of whites. We didn't stay to lunch, though a huge pot of beans on the stove hinted at refreshments to come. Back at the caboose, we giggled when Ann and I were greeted like teen-agers by Hi's growl, "Dancing your fool heads off!" We knew it was just an act, because he had made coffee for us by his own special recipe.

But such frivolities have scant place in the life of the tractor swing. Once the freight is unloaded, there's little delay on the return trip to pick up another load. We hurtled along at five miles an hour in "company notch," or top gear. That may not sound very fast, but speed is purely relative. It was rough beyond words. We reached Ilford thirty days after we had left.

"This is the last year I'm going to freight," some of the men had confided on the trip. But most of them come back to it year after year for employment, in the absence of farm or construction work in winter. And the wind-up of the season means a party, when all irritations of the road are forgotten. It means the pay-off, with a bonus for a good season.

And all the way south to The Pas and beyond, they go right on freighting. Their conversation is a post-mortem of all the incidents of the trip just past, or comparisons with other outfits. I heard almost as much about freighting on the slow train down from the north amongst the men who had been laid off, as I had heard in the long days on the trail. There was the shuffle of cards, the clink of coins, as they played poker with their season's earnings. But I like best to remember their hearty voices roaring out words adapted to a western melody, "*Give me my old Lynn tractor, yo-o-ho . . .*"

12

Duck Lake

The Chipewyans of Caribou Post

SAMUEL HEARNE, who had long dealings with the Chipewyans and knew them intimately, held a low opinion of them in general. "Their dispositions are in general morose and covetous, and they seem to be entirely unacquainted with the name of gratitude." Alexander Mackenzie agreed with that, but claimed them "the most peaceable tribe of Indians" he had ever come upon. Geographically, their territory lay between the Crees to the south, and Eskimos to the north. Historically, they hated both, but toadied to the Crees, and oppressed the Eskimos whenever they got the chance. My husband returned from two months spent photographing them around the trading post at Duck Lake, in their homes and on the traplines. His impressions, following, were as varied as the explorers'.

* * * *

At Churchill, enormous snowdrifts nearly buried the houses, often reaching to the rooftops and higher. Ridges nearly twenty feet high were built up by the wind right across the road. By the next day, they might be cut down again, and piled up elsewhere. Still, the weather was so unusually mild that the eaves dripped steadily, and the snow was too soft for dog travel. It was both cheaper and quicker

to charter Gunnar Ingebrigtsen's plane to take me to Caribou Post, roughly 125 miles northeast of Churchill.


The day we left started foggy, but became clear for a time. We took off, noticing enormous cloudbanks over the bay, which were probably due to open water. It was a very smooth flight, in spite of the clouds we ran into. Gunnar followed the course of the Seal River, hopping from one opening in the clouds to the next. Less than two hours later, he sighted the post on the very edge of the Barrens. People came running out of tents, and someone hustled down from the trading post. Gunnar brought the plane down neatly on the frozen lake between small spruces thrust into the snow. With those threatening cloudbanks in mind, he took off almost at once, to the disappointment of Horace Flett, the post manager.

But he greeted me cheerfully, helped to carry my gear up to the red-and-white building standing on a barren knoll and cupped around with snowdrifts fifteen feet high. The house was snug and clean, and alive with the voices of four small children. Horace spoke English and Cree, only a little Chipewyan; Mrs. Flett spoke Cree and only a little English. The name, Caribou Post, was transferred from another Hudson's Bay Company trading post which had been located east of here. So this area might be called Caribou, or Duck Lake, or Nejalini, as on some maps. The Chipewyans said that the old name, the right one, was Baralzoy-tui, lower Baralzoy Lake.

Of the Chipewyans who trade at Caribou Post, about twenty-five families in all, some were out on their traplines. Only about eight or ten families were in the winter encampments about half an hour's walk from the post. These Indians receive no schooling, medical attention at rare intervals, and church services still more rarely. They are migratory, partly from the habit of centuries, partly because of the need for firewood. The winter camps are usually amongst the trees for protection, summer camps on the margin of some large body of water, like those at Churchill.

The Hudson's Bay post was a combination house-and-store. Chipewyan Indians lounged against the counter, or sat on the floor. They watched me, but quickly looked away when I turned. On this relatively warm day, most wore caps and store-bought clothing; some had caribou skin jackets with coloured ribbons sewn to the shoulders. One little boy was dressed in a caribou coat which came down almost to his ankles. He felt most frustrated, for the ends of the sleeves were sewn up to keep his fingers warm — and out of mischief. A baby began to cry. Its mother with a characteristic quick shrug of one shoulder presented a breast, and the child at once ceased howling. The mother calmly went on smoking her stubby pipe.

The store did not carry a wide variety of merchandise. No bewildering display of umpteen varieties, but rather a simplicity about its wares. Dry goods were sturdy and serviceable—for instance bloomers came in only one size and one colour. The nationally-advertised brands were geared to the lives of the customers—tea, tobacco, canned foods . . .



All trade goods were necessarily higher in price than in city stores, or in posts near a railway. Sometimes the supplies were carried in by tractor-train from Churchill. More often by plane, and a small amount by dog-team. Freight rates made quite an advance in the cost of items such as flour and sugar, but little on dry goods. It made scant difference to the Chipewyans. They could get along nicely without the white man's goods, save for tobacco and tea. They bought other things because of acquired tastes, but gave the impression that it was all nothing to them. Caribou is their mainstay. They find as many uses for it as the South Sea islander for the coconut tree.

But the "Chips" liked the pilot biscuits, round thick hard circles which made me think of *Mutiny on the Bounty*, though I got to like them too. They made casual purchases of lard, sometimes bought candies. Powdered milk was another item which they considered worthy of their purchase. It was a standard request, Horace Flett told me, to have sugar and powdered milk mixed before buying, so they

could put it directly into their tea without the bother of carrying two packages.

Sometimes white trapper Ragnar Johnson came to the post. His trapline lay between Nueltin and Duck Lake, he said vaguely. He preferred to keep it a secret, because he didn't want anyone interfering with it. He distrusted the Chipewyans. The isolation of the trapline seemed enjoyable to him, though he sometimes called on friends at the Nueltin Lake trading post.

Johnson lived in a skin tent which he had made from caribou skins, with the fur turned to the outside, like some of the interior Eskimos. It contained all he needed on the trapline — stove, food, cooking utensils. His clothing, too, was of skin, home-made and so was his sleeping bag, which he declared was warmer than any eiderdown. He had brought in several Arctic fox pelts on this trip, and exchanged them for groceries. Unlike the Chips, he used little meat but lived on biscuits, rice, a few sweets.

"Nope, I never carry a gun," he said in answer to my question. "Only time I'd need one is if a wolf gets caught in one of the traps. Well then the dogs hold him at bay, and I fetch him a clout with a stick."

In the store, Horace never threw out a box, carton or scrap of paper. Every bit of it was used for wrapping and packaging. He had long ago run out of paper bags. And boxes were prized in the highest degree. In the Chipewyan tents, they were used as catch-alls for dozens of items, and very often the baby's cradle-board was made from a packing case.

Pat Hislop, the Chipewyan chore-boy and interpreter at the post, didn't talk much there, but became talkative in the bush, in spite of his broken English. He carried water from a hole cut through four to six feet of ice. He brought in wood with the dog carriole, from a patch of timber three or four miles to the east. It contained perhaps forty dead trees, the largest about ten inches in diameter. When I counted the rings later at the post, I reached two hundred before the rings became so fine that I could no longer

distinguish them. Two hundred years growing to ten inches in size!

On Sunday, Flett harnessed the dogs, tandem-style, to the dog carriage; the dogs decorated with little tinkling bells, the carriage with gay bits of ribbon. We went to visit one of the Chip encampments not far off.

I had ordered a suit of caribou clothing before leaving Winnipeg and picked it up at the Hudson's Bay store in Churchill. It had been made right here at Caribou Post, from light warm spring skins. Consisting of parka, hood, pants and mukluks up to the knees, mitts with the fur turned inside, it weighed only six pounds. Along with it I wore a suit of long underwear, a summer shirt, a pair of heavy socks, duffles and ordinary moccasins. Out on the lake with a temperature of ten below and wind of twenty miles an hour, I found the outfit much too warm, but delightfully easy to move around in. The lightness and warmth of that clothing always impressed me. Horace, running behind to keep warm, kept shivering in his store-clothing. I noticed later that the Chipewyans who have turned to white men's goods also suffered from the cold.

"What are the names of these people?" I called back.

Horace laughed. "Which do you mean—the ones they use here, or the ones they use at Lac du Brochet? Some of them have two or three names, depending on which post they're trading at. Well, there's Bill Throassie, Peter Powderhorn, Duffie Catholic, Alex Kithithee, Fred Jawbone, Peter Kasandalare, Louis Dunaetha, Jean Baptiste Tssezase . . . Some of the Chip words sound kind of like English, so I guess that's where some of the queer names come from."

We followed a narrow trail through snowbanks, between small spruce trees plastered with snow in the lee of the prevailing northwest winds. They took on grotesque shapes with the weight of the snow. The half-dozen huskies pulled with a will, and made good time on the hard path, but would have floundered helplessly in the softer snow alongside.

We were by now close to the camps, most of them canvas tents amongst the trees. A few lived in shacks, but these had

the disadvantage of being fixed. When the firewood around the tent was all cut in a wide circle, the Chip merely moved to a new location. Just beyond this encampment was the wide open wasteland. These Indians are truly "edge of the woods people" as they call themselves.

Outside the tents, there was usually a row of caribou heads, frozen solid and with a glassy stare in the eyes, waiting their turn in the meat pot. We stepped down a couple of feet into the first tent, onto a floor covered with spruce boughs, a clean and sanitary flooring. Frozen meat filled the corners of the tent near the doorway—caribou legs and haunches here, frozen white foxes there. The stove was set just beyond, quite close to the entrance. It was a half barrel, formerly used for oil, open end to the ground, fed through an opening cut at the top, and with a stove-pipe leading through the tent roof. I never saw a damper on any of these pipes, but the canvas roof was pock-marked with holes from descending sparks. Strips of meat were hung over the stove to dry.

Mingled odours assailed my nose at first, but I soon got used to it, and it bothered me not the slightest. Most were lousy, too, but the lice apparently didn't care for white men—I didn't get any. Nor in spite of the example before me, did I sample any. One Chip combed his hair thoughtfully into his hands, selected the plumpest of the pediculosa, cracked them between his teeth as a boy might sunflower seeds, and with the same satisfaction.

The far end of the tent was reserved for sleeping and entertaining. Caribou robes and sleeping bags and the occasional Hudson's Bay blanket was spread or rolled up there. Everyone sat on the floor. Here the women worked at making pemmican, scraping skins, doing unimaginative beadwork, sewing. It was kitchen, living-room, bedroom—not bathroom, for the great outdoors served that purpose. However, every tent reflected its inmates. They might look quite neat, or equally messy.

Mackenzie described the Chipewyan Indians whom he met and travelled with on his journey to the mouth of the Mackenzie River.

Their stature has nothing remarkable about it; but though they are seldom corpulent, they are sometimes robust. Their complexion is swarthy, their features coarse and their hair lank, but always of a dingy black.

At the time when he wrote, the Indians wore tattoo marks and lines on their faces, but I saw no trace of it there. I thought the Chipewyans were unusually tall Indians—three or four of them were just over six feet in moccasins. They were of very straight carriage, broad-shouldered, slim-hipped, none of them fat. Their features were firm and handsome, but they do not express the same range of emotions as white people. From a smile or hearty laugh they went at once to seriousness or sullenness. Most had good teeth. There was no thinning of hair, much less baldness among them. The women did not show the same grace of movement as the men. Some had attractive faces, bland with serenity or indifference. Their lives may not be as hard as formerly, but it is still no easy lot. They are still the burden-bearers to a great extent.

Flett was often called upon, like traders elsewhere, for simple remedies and often for medical attention far beyond a layman's skill. It was always startling to discover how much could be accomplished with that large medical kit supplied by the Department of National Health and Welfare.

Horace had any number of diverse calls during the time I stayed at the post. Today it was on behalf of a baby sick with pneumonia. The baby was propped up, pale, with rasping respiration, and restless. Flett prescribed liquids to drink, rub the chest with ointment, give an enema. Another baby two months old, had pus running from its eyes. I made a boracic solution and applied compresses. The baby stopped screaming, fell asleep at once, and did not stir for several hours. When I removed the compresses and the pus

and grime that came away with them, the infant looked more attractive. But the round dark eyes didn't blink when I tested them with a flashlight.

There was a woman with pleurisy or pneumonia, and I rubbed some ointment into her side, and applied bandages of caribou fur. In English I told Flett that she should be kept sitting up, and warm. He translated it into Cree for the interpreter, who passed it on to the husband in the Chipewyan tongue.

In the same way, Horace would be faced with the problem of what to do with a cold abscess discharging pus. How to treat the numerous sores which covered one of the older hunters, his wife and child. It was the first time I had seen scabies. I read up on the subject in the manual in the post library, and brushed up on medicines furnished by the Department. All three submitted grouchily to the paint job. Then I demonstrated that if they wanted to avoid this trouble, they must keep clean. The woman got the idea, at least partly. She brought a pan of warm water and handed me the soap.

Horace Flett didn't have to handle the health angle alone of course. At intervals, a doctor of the Indian Branch, of the Department of National Health and Welfare dropped in. During my stay at the post, Dr. Yule who looked after all the Indians in Manitoba, flew in with a young Mounted Policeman and Tom Lamb. He checked the health of the Chipewyans, and found them to be in good health as compared with those at Lac du Brochet where measles were rampant. Dr. Yule prescribed simple remedies, ones that were suitable to life in tents. At the post he removed a small cyst from the chore-boy's arm. Pat never moved a muscle though he went pale and sweat glistened on his forehead.

I often went to the Chip encampment after that. At first I was a little repelled by their indifference, their tendency to turn sullen without any visible provocation. There was for a time, a stiffness and reserve about them, a grudging

unco-operative spirit. But I grew to like this independence, and respect them the more for it.

I had bought a number of small presents in Winnipeg—toys, rattles, little pouches, balloons, nail polish—which I doled out. All were accepted without a word of thanks, scarcely looked at. But a week or so later, I would find the children playing with the toys—balloons were a success from the beginning. Nail polish blossomed forth. One woman regarded me with a stony stare for days, until I gave her newborn baby a rattle. A very beautiful smile appeared, her eyes shining. Not out of appreciation exactly, but because of the novelty itself.

I would hand out cigarettes, which they accepted without a word, nor the faintest change of expression. All present would accept, light up, no one saying "Thank you," even casually. But I soon learned not to expect it, and be surprised that I ever had expected it. They never said "Goodbye" or "Hello," but came and went without much chatting amongst themselves.

At the beginning of our acquaintance, some of the men looked angry at my picture-taking, though I tried to be tactful about it. It started when one sophisticate told them they should ask for money whenever I took a picture. How to persuade them to let me continue? Glory and Fame meant nothing to them. What did they care about appearing in a magazine or newspaper? I tried a different tack. Through the hand-me-down method of speaking, I pointed out that it was of no matter to me. But that given the chance, I would take pictures which would show the white man what hard lives they led, how hard they had to work to obtain food, how very poor they were, because the white man knew very little about them.

As Mackenzie had declared—and Horace had corroborated—"They are of a very persevering disposition when their interests are concerned, and their understanding is always directed to the advancement of their own interest (which) sometimes occasions them to be charged with fraudulent habits."

Apparently their character had not changed over the years, for now they went into great discussion, with the word "*Cle-se*" (picture) often cropping up. Whatever the reason, they were at least more tolerant of the camera after that, if not exactly co-operative. It was impossible to ask them to "pose" for any pictures, not because of language difficulties, but because of that independent spirit. And they thought it ridiculous to take pictures of their every-day operations of drying meat, cutting up caribou and hunting. One woman scraped the hair off a caribou skin with a long moose-bone, sharpened at one end. She demanded, and got, a plug of tobacco for permitting herself to be photographed at work.

Sometimes I was annoyed by their transparent excuses, by their obvious lies. For instance, an Indian might arrange to take me to his trapline. But the next day he would appear at the store, "His dogs were tired." Or he felt sick, at a moment's notice. But on the contrary, the next time, he would be at the post to pick me up right on the appointed minute. Another might demand several dollars' worth of provisions to take me by dog-carriole to the encampment.

"*Nus-chall!*" (I walk.)

When the men took me out in the dog carriole, I paid them in trade at the store at the rate of three dollars a day. It went into tea, candies, tobacco, bloomers and once, tooth-paste. The boys really enjoyed the trips, for they were a chance to gad around the country, profitably. They could be quite charming, in a relative sense. Often their apparent gruffness or surliness was not to be taken at face value. The Chipewyan language is a series of explosive gutturals, and "*Ee-e*" (yes) is said with a rising intonation back in the throat and hurled out, so that at first it seems like a vehement refusal. "*Il-ley*" (no) is said just as strongly. The general effect of the speech is to make them sound angry much of the time.

Day after day, I visited the Chip encampments and the Indians gradually became friendly. I had by this time a Chipewyan vocabulary of about twenty words and four or

five phrases, which they sometimes understood. My efforts to learn the language caused huge mirth at times. But they took a great interest, discussed my pronunciation, and were quite helpful about teaching me. The majority spoke only Chipewyan, "a copious language which is very difficult to be attained," according to Mackenzie, again. Two or three of the men had a few words of English, and about the same amount of Cree. So we managed a sort of conversation in Chipewyan-English-pantomime, which was fairly effective.

After a while, the Chips and their environment seemed quite natural. I would leave the post in the morning, take along some tea, several pilot biscuits (one of them for myself), go to different tents, flop down amongst the caribou carcasses and hides, spit contemplatively on the floor like the rest, and play with the drippy-nosed youngsters. The girls now sang for me in shrill tones which dwindled off like a run-down gramophone. I would hum the chant along with them. After a while we would dance around the stove, a slow shuffle, feet always on the ground, a heavy short step, bending our heads so as not to touch the tent walls. We even played with a rubber ball which had a blister from being too close to the stove. The women at first looked on shyly, but they soon began to take part with the greatest zest, throwing the ball so hard that my hands burned. But they themselves were poor catchers, and rather clumsy on their feet. If they fumbled they just sat on the ball, and what could you do then?

In one tent there was a slave-girl. She was a real ragamuffin, with ragged haircut and grimy face. She had to do all the hard work around the tent, and was worked continuously. She seemed mentally and physically behind her age. The squaws shouted at her, and she jumped to throw wood into the stove, flung herself on her stomach to blow the embers. She was always busy, splitting wood or something else, and always grinning.

One day I went hunting caribou with Robinson Throassie, about eight or ten miles south of the post. Hilltops were blown bare of snow, revealing barren boulder-covered

ground. In the hollows were small groves of trees. About noonday, we met another Chip on the trail, who had got three caribou. We made a small fire, cut a few branches of spruce to stand on. Snow brushed off the surface of the lake went into the tea-pail to melt for tea. The Chip cut out the tongue from one of the dead caribou, speared it on a sharp stick and roasted it over the fire. Throassie had one biscuit, a bit of dried meat, a little butter, tea, sugar and milk mixed. My frozen sandwiches were shared, and to me they tasted delicious. The boys examined the sardines, picking them up, tasting, but eventually eating them all. The caribou tongue was now ready—burnt outside, raw inside. Grease ran down our fingers as we chewed on it. I strained caribou hair with my teeth as I drank my tea. Withal I felt a great contentment.

"Mug-up" finished, we followed the broad tracks of some twenty caribou moving across open country. Then from a small knoll we looked around, Throassie examining each sector of country carefully. He tied the dogs to the trees, lest they take off by themselves in pursuit and frighten the "deer" away. Then he spied two animals about half a mile away. Motioning me to keep the dogs quiet, Throassie put on his snowshoes and took up his Savage rifle.

He soon became a small figure in the distance, the two caribou standing out in the open. Something frightened them, for they ran farther off, to again stand poised and still. I saw Throassie kneel and aim. Seconds later came a faint "ping" across the frosty air. Then he got up and ran out of sight.

An hour later he returned, extremely nonchalant, looking at the dogs, standing around, saying nothing. After five minutes he said something like, "Me shoot two." The dogs became excited when he released them, and followed his snowshoe tracks yelping and jumping, needing no urging. The caribou were dead alright, about a hundred yards apart. The dogs attacked them at once, but we kicked them away with moccasined feet.

"Ne-so de-ne-you!" (Good man!) I said.

Throassie understood, and was pleased. He set to work so quickly that I had difficulty in following all his motions. He slashed off the head, slit the belly open, and in a few minutes was peeling off the hide. Intestines were removed, then the carcass was quartered. The dogs got bits of fresh meat from time to time, snapped them down and looked eagerly for more. Throassie laid the skin into the bottom of the carrieole, like a blanket, then expertly laid the meat on it, wrapped it up neatly. Only the offal and stained snow remained behind. The second carcass was skinned and cleaned, and covered with snow, since he could not take it all at one trip.

On our way back to the camp, we came upon a sled-track which we followed for several miles. We came upon eight or nine hunters grouped behind a low barricade of spruce boughs up on a knoll watching for caribou. All were gazing intently into the distance, the wind blustering around them, rippling the fur of their clothing. Dogs and sleds were grouped nearby. Near the fire lay a caribou head, scorched, and a couple of legs burnt black on the outside. Someone turned the meat occasionally, breaking off a chunk, his jaws moving rhythmically as he resumed his watching. Thus the Chipewyan have for centuries watched for "*e-dthen*" the caribou. For the caribou are the most important thing in their lives, providing them with food and clothing, with sinew for sewing, with antlers for sled brakes . . . in fact, so many ways that I never learned all of them.

Back in the tents the women took over. If the hide was to be used for clothing, the hair might be left on, caribou fur being remarkably light and warm. Sometimes they shaved the hair off with a sharp knife, and of course, stray hairs got into everything. The shaven hide is washed and rubbed in soapy water, then wrung dry. The brains are used in the tanning operation. Kneaded to a paste like a sandwich spread, then diluted with water, it had the consistency of cream of mushroom soup. In this the skin was soaked to bleach and soften. Placed outside to freeze, it was softened again over a stiff wire. By this time it was

snowy white and beautiful. More often it was merely smoked over a tripod and smudge, to a yellow-brown colour, the acrid odour of woodsmoke in the moccasins, mittens or jackets made from it.

Of even greater value is the meat. I saw absolutely no waste at any time. They used every bit of the animal except some of the intestines. Heads and bones were split to obtain the marrow, and the bones were used as scrapers. The bladder was used to carry melted fat. Even the paunch is eaten as salad, a half-digested sour mixture of reindeer moss. Part of the meat is eaten fresh, roasted or boiled over the fire. Some of it is made into pemmican. Thin slabs of meat are hung up in the tents, usually near the stove. Eventually they dry into dark hard strips, sometimes used in that way. More often the dried meat is pounded on a rock with the blunt side of an axe, and reduced to a powder, which is mixed with backfat.

And as important as meat for the hunter and his family is food for his dogs. Without them, the hunter cannot travel in search of food or fur, and it means starvation. So does a change in the route of the caribou migrations, as sometimes happens.

A three-day storm followed the beautiful weather. There was no fresh snowfall, but the wind blew the fallen snow into new patterns. The buildings at the post creaked and groaned in the uninterrupted wind as it blew off the Barrens to the north. Windows rattled, and my bedroom became too cold, so I moved my sleeping bag into the living-room. Even though the doors were closed tightly, fine snow drifted in at the cracks. Outside with the continued wind, the snow packed in places so hard that it hurt to walk in moccasins. I could feel the path under my feet, though I couldn't see it, as I made my way to the encampment.

They offered me tea, and cleaned the cup for me specially. One of the women picked out the old tea leaves with her fingers, then rubbed a rag around the inside. Not quite good enough—so she spit into it, and applied a fine polish. We all drank tea, munched on dried meat, sitting around on

the floor. The women and another man began to talk, and I caught the word "*Cle-se*" from time to time.

After the storm, I went with John Duck and his son around their trapline. They called for me at the post, idled around while I gathered up my paraphernalia with that deliberation I had learned from the Chipewyans. It had seemed annoying at first, but after all, what was the hurry?

They had two teams and carriages. In one was packed my grub box, sleeping bag, myself, dog-chains, and a few other odds and ends. John rode on the back of this carriage, holding onto its high handles, or sometimes ran along behind. His eighteen-year-old son had four dogs which hauled the tent, stove and pipes, their grub box, dog feed, and their sleeping robes. I took my own food, and also paid the men five dollars a day for the pleasure of accompanying them.

John shouted something like "*horsy!*" but without the "O" in it, and we were off. Riding in the dog carriage is less comfortable than it sounds. It was never dull, for the carriage swung, swayed, leaped, tilted so that I was always busy shifting my weight to compensate. Sometimes it upset, wrapped itself around a tree. Sometimes branches sideswiped me, or whipped my face as we crunched over the hard snow. But I liked it. I felt a deep contentment, meditating, automatically moving to the shifting sled beneath me. John Duck shouted at his dogs from time to time, cursed them occasionally, pleaded with them, threw cakes of hard snow to speed them. The dogs yelped before the snow reached them. When their interest seemed to flag too much, he shouted "*E-dthen*" and the dogs would leap forward in their traces. It never failed.

John was six feet tall, thin, active and graceful, perhaps forty-five years old. Because he had not a trace of gray, I had taken him for much younger than that. His son, smiling and shy, had little to say at any time. But since John had a few words of English, we managed to exchange ideas from time to time. He was always helpful and smiling, once more causing me to alter my impressions of the Chipewyans.

"Oooo," he shouted, when we reached the trees. The dogs stopped almost at once. We gathered bits of dried wood for our first "boil-up", drank our tea and munched on a couple of biscuits. Two whiskey-jacks (Canada jays) appeared from nowhere, and impatiently wished us out of the way, so that they could clean up any scraps.

While we halted, the dogs rolled in the snow, over and over, and got themselves all tangled up in the harness. John seized the leader by one front- and one hind-leg, gave him a flip. The dog turned a somersault in the air, came down on four feet, wagging his tail. Everything was all right now.

Our first night out, we camped amongst the spruces near a lakeshore. The dogs were chained to nearby trees, well apart so they could not fight. Boughs were cut from the thickest of the spruces to bed them down. They got chunks of meat, still with the hair attached, about the size of two fists, which they attacked growling, then curled up and went to sleep.

The tent was strung between trees, guy ropes holding it in place. The stove was set on pegs driven deep into the trampled snow, the telescoping stove-pipes leading through the canvas roof. A stick in the ground supported the solitary candle. A roaring fire was going in no time, one which required constant attention for it gave alternately too much and too little heat. We made tea, thawed out the bannock Mrs. Flett had made for me, and were soon munching contentedly, the Ducks on dried meat, I on cheese and jam. We swapped. But I think they ate my food merely to be polite, for they kept dipping back into the bag of caribou meat.

We prepared for bed by the simple process of taking off our outer clothing, and crawling into our sleeping bags. Mine was a bulky eiderdown; theirs, light-weight caribou bags, fur turned inside and lined with a blanket. I wakened long before either of them, cold and shivering, my robe frozen hard around the face. Two little jets of steamy breath emerged regularly from their bags. After that, I left

my fur clothing on at night, even though it was a snug fit in the sleeping bag.

The next day we made the rounds of perhaps a dozen traps. None of them contained anything except one over-curious whiskey-jack. At our second camp, we stayed two nights. John had been puzzled over my picture-taking, and finally came out with it. "You take picture of me—you pay. Okay. See man one time, he say, 'Me take you picture—you pay me.' Why is that?" I explained as well as I could, considering our language difficulties.

Then he watched in fascination my pencil moving over the paper as I wrote, with the same interest I would have shown in him writing syllabic characters. I handed him the pencil and paper—and at once he drew a couple of little sketches. One was a beaver and its lodge, in good proportion and immediately recognizable. The other was of a man beating a drum.

By now his reserve was worn down a bit, and I made some comment about drum playing, and singing the old songs. His eyes took on a dreamy look, and he began humming a monotonous singsong melody, beating time with a spoon on the side of my grub box. Presently his son joined in, and both gathered more strength and enthusiasm. It was a scene to remember—the wordless chant of ancient origin, its rhythm not of our time nor race; a chant which seemed to be part of the country, the Northern Lights, the Barren Lands, the howling winds. The light of the single candle flickered over their intent bronzed faces. And I thought, "This life appeals to me. It is rational and harmonious, life stripped to the essentials. From here, the chaos and confusion by which the white man lives looks utterly idiotic."

Our last night out, John spoke of religion. Most of the Chipewyans around Duck Lake were adherents of the Church of England. Some had come from Lac du Brochet, who were of the Roman Catholic persuasion. Sandy Clippings of Caribou Post, carried on as a lay preacher. He wore "white stuff" according to John, and "talk, talk, talk long time, maybe three hour. Sometimes people go sleep." I had the

impression that the Chipewyans took religion much the same way as many of their white brothers — merely to be on the safe side, and perhaps also in their case, to stand in well with the authorities.

"Superstitious in the extreme," wrote Alexander MacKenzie. "Almost every action of their lives however trivial is more or less influenced by some whimsical notion. I never observed that they had any particular form of religious worship." But he did learn of one of their beliefs regarding the Hereafter:

They believe that immediately after their death, they pass into another world, where they arrive at a large river, on which they embark in a stone canoe, and that a gentle current bears them on to an extensive lake, in the centre of which is a most beautiful island; and that in view of this delightful abode they receive that judgment for their conduct during life, which terminates their final state and unalterable allotment.

If their good actions are declared to predominate, they are landed upon the island, where there is to be no end to their happiness; which however, according to their notions, consists in an eternal enjoyment of sensual pleasure and carnal gratification. But if their bad actions weigh down the balance, the canoe sinks at once, and leaves them up to their chins in the water to behold, and regret the reward enjoyed by the good, and eternally struggling but with unavailing endeavours, to reach the blissful island from which they are excluded forever.

Whether or not this belief still persists, I could not learn. But there is a form of religious observance nowadays in the abstinence from meat on Fridays amongst the Brochet Indians, and in church service on Sunday amongst those of the Anglican faith. It was held in a little shed a few hundred yards from the post.

Sandy Clippings clad in white surplice preached as best he knew how, and made a good figure with his dark face and rich voice. He talked, preached, prayed and sang. There was a full attendance, all sitting on the floor, of course. Outside church, Sandy was a likeable smiling man, who spoke very little English. The mystery of it was, "Who taught

Sandy his religion?" How could anyone put across the abstractions of the Christian faith without knowledge of the Chipewyan language—or even then? So far as Horace knew, there was no one who spoke Chipewyan, except the venerable priest Father Egernolf over at Brochet. And even he faltered at times, wondering if they would ever learn.

The story is told of his efforts with a catechism class for children. Every day through the summer he went over the same thing, the identical questions and answers. There was a little girl in the class, a bright intelligent-looking youngster, whom he gave special attention.

"What is the most beautiful thing God created?" he would ask, hoping that this time she would remember the answer "Man and all the angels".

But invariably, the child would look up with shining eyes, and say, "*E-dthen!*" The caribou was the one good and perfect thing to the Chipewyans.

Certainly Father Egernolf had encountered the superstitions of the Chipewyans considerably. He denounced drum-playing and "skundering" as heathen practices, but they went on just the same only more furtively. Skundering is communing with the spirits, the conjurer sitting in a small high teepee, shaking the structure, talking and singing.

Horace Flett told me the story of a feared medicine man, who died several years ago. "He left a small-bag of conjuring implements to his wife, with the instructions that it was to be burnt unopened, when his body was prepared for burial. Several old women prepared the corpse, and the widow unobtrusively threw the bag into the stove. Three explosions shook the cabin, frightening away the old women." Whether the old man hoped to scare off evil spirits or to have one last chuckle, no one knows.

I was glad to know that drum-playing was far from ended, as I sat against the wall in the native house at the post that night. Chief Denard of the Brochet tribe played his drum, and sang. We sat in the dim light watching him, drum up near his cheek, eyes closed, mouth slack and open. He quite forgot his audience. Starting slowly, beating gently,

he worked himself up into a frenzy, feet and knees shaking, shoulder bobbing, his monotonous and repetitive chant and drum-beating increasing in volume. Suddenly he stopped. It was finished. But he had been as absorbed as in a trance.

As the time drew closer for the plane to return for me, I became more reluctant to leave the serene life of the remote trading post. By now I took the Chipewyan ways for granted, saw nothing unusual in their daily events, and had photographed "everything." In fact, I had lost perspective, could no more see pictures in these things than the Chipewyans themselves. At any rate, there was no choice.

The plane came. I took a few more deep breaths of the air, another long look at these friends I had made, and stepped into the machine. The abrupt departure made me realize even more, that I had become very attached to the Chips, to the leisurely harmonious life, the absence of most things that people deem essential to "normal" life.

Winnipeg is the hub of Manitoba, and there we met again. Winnipeg of the flooded streets, the crowds in which we both felt shy after weeks in the bush. The stores with all their beautiful wares of delicate colours, the fragrance of the cosmetic counters, the exotic foods . . . It seemed a world of luxury, a sort of perpetual Christmas morning. It pointed up even more sharply the contrasts in Manitoba's ways of life.

INDEX

- Agassiz, Glacial Lake, 92, 96, 131, 136
 Altona, 91
 Amery, 173
 Arborg, 41
 Assiniboia, 23, 56, 109, 110
 Assiniboine River, 1, 3, 9, 15, 87, 103, 105, 107, 111, 120, 123 ff., 128. Prehistoric, 131
 Audy Lake, 139

 Baldur, 99, 121, 124
 Beausejour, 71
 Berens River, 49, 51-53, 73
 Birch River, 146
 Bird's Hill, 68-70
 Birtle, 103, 133
 Bissett, 74
 Black Bear Island, 50
 Boissevain, 100, 102
 Brandon, 100, 120, 124 f., 166
 Brandon Hills, 122, 124
 Brereton Lake, 76
 Brokenhead River, 71
 Bruxelles, vii
 Button, 165

 Carberry 118 f.
 Carrot River, 155
 Cedar Lake, 113
 Churchill, vii, 147 ff., 155, 158 f., 160 f., 163, 166, 172 f., 177 f., 179-197, 201, 215 ff., 219
 Churchill River, 175 ff., 179, 180 ff., 185, 188 f., 196
 Clearwater Lake, 159 f., 163 f., 166
 Cook's Creek, 70 f.
 Cormorant Lake, 73, 164
 Cranberry Portage, 161
 Cross Lake, 55
 Cumberland House, Sask., 62, 156, 158, 199

 Dauphin, 113, 143, 161, 195, 198
 Dauphin, Lake, 113, 141, 143
 Dawson Road, 19, 81 f., 83 f., 86
 Deloraine, 102
 Delta Marsh, 113-118, 132, 151

 Deering's Point, 148, 155
 Dropmore, 133
 Duck Lake, 201, 215-234
 Duck Mountain, 141, 143 f., 198

 Edward Lake, 141
 Elie, 126-128
 Elma, 80
 Emerson, vii, 89 f.

 Flin Flon, 149, 159 ff.
 Fort Alexander, 75
 Fort Ellice, 128
 Fort Garry (Lower) 10, 33-37, 47
 Fort Garry (Upper) 13 ff., 19, 24, 34, 54, 63, 82, 88, 110, 128, 129
 Fort Garry Municipality, 6, 87, 89
 Fort la Reine (Portage la Prairie) 93, 111, 112
 Fort Prince of Wales, 165, 183, 189-192

 Garland, 144
 Carson, 71
 Gillingham, 172
 Gimli, 39-43
 Gladstone, 94, 131
 God's Lake, 151, 201 ff., 208, 213
 Gonor, 46
 Grand Beach, 49, 71
 Grand Rapids, 64
 Grande Pointe, 86
 Great Black Island, 51
 Great Falls, 74
 Gull Harbour, 66
 Gunnar Mine, 74

 Hartney, 103
 Hayes River, 53, 55, 151, 155
 Headingley, 106, 126
 Hecla Island, 48, 50, 66
 Herb Lake, 165
 Herchmer, 174 f.
 High Bluff, 109
 Hnaua, 41
 Holland, vii
 Hudson Bay, v, 53, 148, 154, 179, 181, 185 f.
 Hudson Bay Junction, Sask., 149, 198

- Ilford, 172, 199-201, 202, 214
 Indian Springs, 98-99
 International Peace Garden, 100
 102
 Island Lake, 202, 209 ff.
 Isle de Chênes, 85

 Jacam, 165
 Jessica Lake, 76 f.

 Kathleen, Lake, 139
 Kettle Rapids, 173
 Kildonan, 9, 10, 22, 24 f., 45, 68
 Killarney, vii, 100
 Knee Lake, 211

 Lac du Bonnet, 73 f.
 Lac du Brochet, 204-219, 222,
 231 ff.
 Lake of the Woods, 72, 81 f., 89
 Landing Lake, 167, 170
 La Perouse, 165
 La Rivière, 5, 94
 La Salle River, 103
 Letellier, 89
 Libau, 49
 Lingman Lake, 202
 Little Britain, 32 ff.
 Lockport, 29, 30-32, 46
 Luke, 165
 Lynn Lake, 163

 Macdonald, 129
 Manitoba, Lake, v ff., 94, 109 ff.,
 136
 Manitoba, Province of, v f., 12, 19,
 21, 35
 Manito Hills, 121-123
 Manitou Rapids, 167, 172
 Matage, 165
 Matheson Island, 50
 Meadow Portage, 113
 Melbourne, vii
 Medard, 165
 Medika, 81
 Melita, 103
 Minnedosa, 131 f., 134
 Minnewashta, 91, 93
 Moon Lake, 141
 Moose Lake, 149-151
 Morden, 91-93
 Mossy Portage, 113

 Napinka, 103
 Neepawa, 131
 Nelson (port of) 148 f., 173
 Nelson House, 58, 167, 171
 Nelson River, v, 55, 149, 165, 167,
 172 f.
 Netley Marsh, 28, 48 f., 67, 94,
 151
 Ninette, 99
 Nonsuch, 165
 Norgate, 139
 North-West Angle, 82
 Norway House, 10, 23, 34, 38,
 43 f., 50, 53, 55 f., 57-64, 73,
 167
 Nueltin Lake, 218

 Oxford House, 203

 Pas, The, 27 f., 113 f., 147-159,
 161, 198 f., 204, 214
 Pasquia Hills, 147
 Pasquia River, 113
 Pelican Lake, 96
 Pembina Hills, 5, 90, 92, 94
 Pembina Plain, 90
 Pembina River, 90, 94, 96
 Pierson, 102
 Pikwitonei, 171
 Pilot Mound, 95-96, 98
 Pinawa Channel, 73
 Pine Dock, 50
 Pine Falls, 74
 Pipun, 165
 Playgreen Lake, 55 f.,
 Plum Coulee, 85, 91
 Poplar Point, 108
 Porcupine Mountain, 146
 Portage la Prairie, 27, 88, 93,
 109-113, 117, 128 f.
 Portage Plains, 108-109
 Pukitiwagan, 204

 Rat Creek, 110
 Red River, vi, 1 ff., 9, 15 f., 21, 25,
 29 f., 38, 44, 45-49
 Red Rock Lake, 76
 Red Sucker Lake, 202, 208 ff.,
 213
 Rennie, 75 f.
 Reykjavik, vii
 Reynolds, 81 f.
 Richer, 83
 Riding Mountain, 133, 134-143,
 198
 Riding Mountain National Park,
 134-142
 Riverton, 41
 Rock Lake, 96-97
 Roseau River, 89

Ross Island, 57
 Rossville, 49, 57, 58-60
 Rupert's Land, vi, 19, 58, 62, 81
 St. Andrew's Church, 27 f., 46, 54, 108
 St. Andrew's Lock, 29 f., 46-47
 St. Andrew's Rapids, 27, 34
 St. Boniface, City of, 3, 4, 7, 16-21, 108
 St. Francois Xavier, 107-108
 St. George, 74
 St. Jean Baptiste, 89
 St. Malo, 89
 St. Norbert, 87-88, 103
 St. Peter's, 27 f., 48
 Ste. Agathe, 89
 Ste. Anne des Chênes, 82, 84
 San Antonio Mine, 74
 Sandilands, 76, 82 f.
 Saskatchewan River, 20, 29, 64, 113, 148 f., 151, 154 ff.
 Saskatchewan Trail, 128 f., 131.
 Seine River, 1, 9, 21, 84
 Sellkirk, vii, 38, 47 f., 67
 Seven Sisters Falls, 73, 77
 Shamattawa, 55
 Sherridon, 149, 159, 161, 163
 Shilo, Camp, 122
 Shoal Lake, 128, 132
 Silver Falls, 74
 Singoosh Lake, 145
 Sipiwesk, 165
 Slave Falls, 72-73
 Sloops' Cove, 192-194
 Snow Valley, 5
 Snowflake, 94
 Souris, 103
 Souris, Glacial Lake, 96, 120
 Souris River, 102 f., 124
 Spruce Hills, 118 f.
 Star Mound, 94-95
 Steele's Ferry, 123
 Steinbach, 84-85
 Stonewall, 39
 Stony Mountain, 25, 27
 Summerberry Marsh, 151 f.
 Swan Lake, 96, 98
 Swan River, 145-146

Thicket Portage, 167 f.
 Thunder Mountain, 145
 Tiger Hills, 122, 124
 Tolstoi, vii
 Toutes Aides, vii
 Treherne, 120
 Turtle Mountain, 96, 100, 122
 Tyndall, 4, 71
 Tyrrel, 165
 Victoria Beach, 71
 Wabowden, 163, 165 ff.
 Warren's Landing, 55 ff., 64
 Wasagaming, 134-139, 141
 Waterhen River, 113
 Wawanesa, 103-104
 Wekusko, 165
 Westbourne, 129 f.
 Whirlpool Lake, 139
 White Horse Plain, 105-107
 Whitemouth, 80, 84
 Whitemud River, 129 f.
 Whiteshell Forest Reserve, 72, 75-79
 Whitewater, 102
 Windygates, 93
 Winkler, 85, 91
 Winnipeg, City of, 1-22, 29, 31, 38, 67 f., 72, 81, 86 f., 89, 105, 126 f., 134, 153, 161, 198, 234
 Winnipeg, Lake, 22 f., 29, 40 ff., 44, 49 f., 51-56, 64-66, 72, 113, 136, 151, 156
 Winnipeg Beach, 39, 49
 Winnipeg River, v, 71 ff.
 Winnipegosis, 143
 Winnipegosis, Lake, 113, 136, 141, 143, 146
 Wintering Lake, 167, 169, 171
 Wivenhoe, 165
 Woodside, 131
 Wuskatasko, vii
 York Factory, 10, 17, 53-55, 56, 58, 60, 63, 154 ff., 165, 183 f., 192 ff.